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Americans All

STORIES OF AMERICAN LIFE

Edited by BENJAMIN A. HEYDRICK

REVISED BY BLANCHE JENNINGS THOMPSON

HEAD OF THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT, BENJAMIN
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PREFACE

“I hear America singing,” said Walt Whitman, as he listened to the strong and cheerful voices of the workers. He heard the carpenter, the mason, and the mechanic; the boatman and the shoemaker; the plowboy and the deck hand; the happy housewife; and the busy mother singing; and he wrote in praise of them. If the good gray poet lived today, his ears would catch the sound of many other voices, for the workers of America have grown to a mighty host. In the North, the South, and the Middle West, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, they run the trains and drive the busses; they operate the switchboards; they run the linotypes and presses; they buy and sell, they hunt and fish, they fell the giant trees and reap the yellow harvest. Humble clerks and farmhands; writers, ministers, and teachers; airplane pilots, radio engineers, shop-keepers, and truck drivers — in our great democracy they work together in a vast and mighty brotherhood.

The stories in *Americans All* present a cross-section of American life in various parts of our country, past and present, with the greater emphasis upon the contemporary. Many of them deal with problems of American youth, particularly those related to getting an education, earning a living, or adjusting to family relationships. Most of the stories deal with struggle of some kind, for nearly all the worth-while things of life are bought at the price of heavy toil and stern self-discipline.

In this book are many characters to be long remembered for their faith, their courage, and their fortitude; for their honor, loyalty, and sturdy independence.

It is people like these who built our great democracy; it is people like these who fought the battles "to make and to save the state"; it is people just like these who will always keep the flame of freedom burning. We salute them — Americans all.

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In the Mountains of Carolina

In "A Mother in Mannville," from the book, When the Whippoorwill, Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings gives us a portrait of a boy. The scene is in the Carolinas, and the boy is Jerry, whose hair was "the color of corn shocks" and whose eyes were "like the mountain sky when rain is pending." Jerry was an orphan with his own row to hoe, but he did not ask for sympathy. Jerry had character and imagination. He built his own fortune.

A MOTHER IN MANNVILLE

by MARJORIE KINNAN RAWLINGS

The orphanage is high in the Carolina mountains. Sometimes in winter the snowdrifts are so deep that the institution is cut off from the village below, from all the world. Fog hides the mountain peaks, the snow swirls down the valleys, and a wind blows so bitterly that the orphanage boys who take the milk twice daily to the baby cottage reach the door with fingers stiff in an agony of numbness.

"Or when we carry trays from the cookhouse for the ones that are sick," Jerry said, "we get our faces frostbit, because we can't put our hands over them. I have gloves," he added. "Some of the boys don't have any."

He liked the late spring, he said. The rhododendron was in bloom, a carpet of color, across the mountainsides, soft as the May winds that stirred the hemlocks. He called it laurel.

"It's pretty when the laurel blooms," he said. "Some of it's pink and some of it's white."

I was there in the autumn. I wanted quiet, isolation, to do some troublesome writing. I wanted mountain air to blow out the malaria from too long a time in the subtropics. I was homesick, too, for the flaming of maples in October, and for corn shocks and pumpkins and black-walnut trees and the lift of hills. I found them all, living in a cabin that belonged to the orphanage, half a mile beyond the orphanage farm. When I took the cabin, I asked for a boy or man to come and chop wood for the fireplace. The first few days

were warm, I found what wood I needed about the cabin, no one came, and I forgot the order.

I looked up from my typewriter one late afternoon, a little startled. A boy stood at the door, and my pointer dog, my companion, was at his side and had not barked to warn me. The boy was probably twelve years old, but undersized. He wore overalls and a torn shirt, and was barefooted.

He said, "I can chop some wood today."

I said, "But I have a boy coming from the orphanage."

"I'm the boy."

"You? But you're small."

"Size don't matter, chopping wood," he said. "Some of the big boys don't chop good. I've been chopping wood at the orphanage a long time."

I visualized mangled and inadequate branches for my fires. I was well into my work and not inclined to conversation. I was a little blunt.

"Very well. There's the ax. Go ahead and see what you can do."

I went back to work, closing the door. At first the sound of the boy dragging brush annoyed me. Then he began to chop. The blows were rhythmic and steady, and shortly I had forgotten him, the sound no more of an interruption than a consistent rain. I suppose an hour and a half passed, for when I stopped and stretched and heard the boy's steps on the cabin stoop, the sun was dropping behind the farthest mountain, and the valleys were purple with something deeper than the asters.

The boy said, "I have to go to supper now. I can come again tomorrow evening."

I said, "I'll pay you now for what you've done," thinking I should probably have to insist on an older boy. "Ten cents an hour?"

"Anything is all right."

We went together back of the cabin. An astonishing

amount of solid wood had been cut. There were cherry logs and heavy roots of rhododendron, and blocks from the waste pine and oak left from the building of the cabin.

“But you’ve done as much as a man,” I said. “This is a splendid pile.”

I looked at him, actually, for the first time. His hair was the color of the corn shocks and his eyes, very direct, were like the mountain sky when rain is pending — gray, with a shadowing of that miraculous blue. As I spoke, a light came over him, as though the setting sun had touched him with the same suffused glory with which it touched the mountains. I gave him a quarter.

“You may come tomorrow,” I said, “and thank you very much.”

He looked at me, and at the coin, and seemed to want to speak, but could not, and turned away.

“I’ll split kindling tomorrow,” he said over his thin ragged shoulder. “You’ll need kindling and medium wood and logs and backlogs.”

At daylight I was half wakened by the sound of chopping. Again it was so even in texture that I went back to sleep. When I left my bed in the cool morning, the boy had come and gone, and a stack of kindling was neat against the cabin wall. He came again after school in the afternoon and worked until time to return to the orphanage. His name was Jerry; he was twelve years old, and he had been at the orphanage since he was four. I could picture him at four, with the same grave gray-blue eyes and the same — independence? No, the word that comes to me is “integrity.”

The word means something very special to me, and the quality for which I use it is a rare one. My father had it — there is another of whom I am almost sure — but almost no man of my acquaintance possesses it with the clarity, the purity, the simplicity of a mountain stream. But the boy Jerry had it. It is bedded on courage, but it is more than

brave. It is honest, but is more than honesty. The ax handle broke one day. Jerry said the woodshop at the orphanage would repair it. I brought money to pay for the job and he refused it.

"I'll pay for it," he said. "I broke it. I brought the ax down careless."

"But no one hits accurately every time," I told him. "The fault was in the wood of the handle. I'll see the man from whom I bought it."

It was only then that he would take the money. He was standing back of his own carelessness. He was a free-will agent and he chose to do careful work, and if he failed, he took the responsibility without subterfuge.

And he did for me the unnecessary thing, the gracious thing, that we find done only by the great of heart. Things no training can teach, for they are done on the instant, with no predicated experience. He found a cubbyhole beside the fireplace that I had not noticed. There, of his own accord, he put kindling and "medium" wood, so that I might always have dry fire material ready in case of sudden wet weather. A stone was loose in the rough walk to the cabin. He dug a deeper hole and steadied it, although he came, himself, by a short cut over the bank. I found that when I tried to return his thoughtfulness with such things as candy and apples, he was wordless. "Thank you" was, perhaps, an expression for which he had had no use, for his courtesy was instinctive. He only looked at the gift and at me, and a curtain lifted, so that I saw deep into the clear well of his eyes, and gratitude was there, and affection, soft over the firm granite of his character.

He made simple excuses to come and sit with me. I could no more have turned him away than if he had been physically hungry. I suggested once that the best time for us to visit was just before supper, when I left off my writing. After that, he waited always until my typewriter had been

some time quiet. One day I worked until nearly dark. I went outside the cabin, having forgotten him. I saw him going up over the hill in the twilight toward the orphanage. When I sat down on my stoop, a place was warm from his body where he had been sitting.

He became intimate, of course, with my pointer, Pat. There is a strange communion between a boy and a dog. Perhaps they possess the same singleness of spirit, the same kind of wisdom. It is difficult to explain, but it exists. When I went across the state for a week end, I left the dog in Jerry's charge. I gave him the dog whistle and the key to the cabin, and left sufficient food. He was to come two or three times a day and let out the dog, and feed and exercise him. I should return Sunday night, and Jerry would take out the dog for the last time Sunday afternoon and then leave the key under an agreed hiding place.

My return was belated and fog filled the mountain passes so treacherously that I dared not drive at night. The fog held the next morning, and it was Monday noon before I reached the cabin. The dog had been fed and cared for that morning. Jerry came early in the afternoon, anxious.

"The superintendent said nobody would drive in the fog," he said. "I came just before bedtime last night and you hadn't come. So I brought Pat some of my breakfast this morning. I wouldn't have let anything happen to him."

"I was sure of that. I didn't worry."

"When I heard about the fog, I thought you'd know."

He was needed for work at the orphanage, and he had to return at once. I gave him a dollar in payment, and he looked at it and went away. But that night he came in the darkness and knocked at the door.

"Come in, Jerry," I said, "if you're allowed to be away this late."

"I told maybe a story," he said. "I told them I thought you would want to see me."

"That's true," I assured him, and I saw his relief. "I want to hear about how you managed with the dog."

He sat by the fire with me, with no other light, and told me of their two days together. The dog lay close to him and found a comfort there that I did not have for him. And it seemed to me that being with my dog, and caring for him, had brought the boy and me, too, together, so that he felt that he belonged to me as well as to the animal.

"He stayed right with me," he told me, "except when he ran in the laurel. He likes the laurel. I took him up over the hill and we both ran fast. There was a place where the grass was high and I lay down in it and hid. I could hear Pat hunting for me. He found my trail and he barked. When he found me, he acted crazy, and he ran around and around me, in circles."

We watched the flames.

"That's an apple log," he said. "It burns the prettiest of any wood."

We were very close.

He was suddenly impelled to speak of things he had not spoken of before, nor had I cared to ask him.

"You look a little bit like my mother," he said. "Especially in the dark, by the fire."

"But you were only four, Jerry, when you came here. You have remembered how she looked, all these years?"

"My mother lives in Mannville," he said.

For a moment, finding that he had a mother shocked me as greatly as anything in my life has ever done, and I did not know why it disturbed me. Then I understood my distress. I was filled with a passionate resentment that any woman should go away and leave her son. A fresh anger added itself. A son like this one—the orphanage was a wholesome place, the executives were kind, good people, the food was more than adequate, the boys were healthy, a ragged shirt was no hardship, nor the doing of clean labor.

Granted, perhaps, that the boy felt no lack, what kind of woman was she who did not yearn over this child's lean body? At four he would have looked the same as now. Nothing, I thought, nothing in life could change those eyes. His quality must be apparent to an idiot, a fool. I burned with questions I could not ask. In any, I was afraid, there would be pain.

"Have you seen her, Jerry — lately?"

"I see her every summer. She sends for me."

I wanted to cry out, "Why are you not with her? How can she let you go away again?"

He said, "She comes up here from Mannville whenever she can. She doesn't have a job now."

His face shone in the firelight.

"She wanted to give me a puppy, but they can't let any one boy keep a puppy. You remember the suit I had on last Sunday?" He was plainly proud. "She sent me that for Christmas. The Christmas before that" — he drew a long breath, savoring the memory — "she sent me a pair of skates."

"Roller skates?"

My mind was busy, making pictures of her, trying to understand her. She had not, then, entirely deserted or forgotten him. But why, then — I thought, "I must not condemn her without knowing."

"Roller skates. I let the other boys use them. They're always borrowing them. But they're careful of them."

What circumstance other than poverty —

"I'm going to take the dollar you gave me for taking care of Pat," he said, "and buy her a pair of gloves."

I could only say, "That will be nice. Do you know her size?"

"I think it's $8\frac{1}{2}$," he said.

He looked at my hands.

"Do you wear $8\frac{1}{2}$?" he asked.

"No. I wear a smaller size, a 6."

"Oh! Then I guess her hands are bigger than yours."

I hated her. Poverty or no, there was other food than bread, and the soul could starve as quickly as the body. He was taking his dollar to buy gloves for her big stupid hands, and she lived away from him, in Mannville, and contented herself with sending him skates.

"She likes white gloves," he said. "Do you think I can get them for a dollar?"

"I think so," I said.

I decided that I should not leave the mountains without seeing her and knowing for myself why she had done this thing.

The human mind scatters its interests as though made of thistledown, and every wind stirs and moves it. I finished my work. It did not please me, and I gave my thoughts to another field. I should need some Mexican material.

I made arrangements to close my Florida place. Mexico immediately, and doing the writing there, if conditions were favorable. Then, Alaska with my brother. After that, heaven knew what or where.

I did not take time to go to Mannville to see Jerry's mother, nor even to talk with the orphanage officials about her. I was a trifle abstracted about the boy, because of my work and plans. And after my first fury at her — we did not speak of her again — his having a mother, any sort at all, not far away, in Mannville, relieved me of the ache I had had about him. He did not question the anomalous relation. He was not lonely. It was none of my concern.

He came every day and cut my wood and did small helpful favors and stayed to talk. The days had become cold, and often I let him come inside the cabin. He would lie on the floor in front of the fire, with one arm across the pointer, and they would both doze and wait quietly for me. Other days they ran with a common ecstasy through the laurel

and since the asters were now gone, he brought me back vermillion maple leaves, and chestnut boughs dripping with imperial yellow. I was ready to go.

I said to him, "You have been my good friend, Jerry. I shall often think of you and miss you. Pat will miss you too. I am leaving tomorrow."

He did not answer. When he went away, I remember that a new moon hung over the mountains, and I watched him go in silence up the hill. I expected him the next day, but he did not come. The details of packing my personal belongings, loading my car, arranging the bed over the seat, where the dog would ride, occupied me until late in the day. I closed the cabin and started the car, noticing that the sun was in the west and I should do well to be out of the mountains by nightfall. I stopped by the orphanage and left the cabin key and money for my light bill with Miss Clark.

"And will you call Jerry for me to say good-by to him?"

"I don't know where he is," she said. "I'm afraid he's not well. He didn't eat his dinner this noon. One of the other boys saw him going over the hill into the laurel. He was supposed to fire the boiler this afternoon. It's not like him; he's unusually reliable."

I was almost relieved, for I knew I should never see him again, and it was easier not to say good-by to him.

I said, "I wanted to talk with you about his mother — why he's here — but I'm in more of a hurry than I expected to be. It's out of the question for me to see her now too. But here's some money I'd like to leave with you to buy things for him at Christmas and on his birthday. It will be better than for me to try to send him things. I could so easily duplicate — skates, for instance."

She blinked her honest spinster's eyes.

"There's not much use for skates here," she said.

Her stupidity annoyed me.

"What I mean," I said, "is that I don't want to dupli-

cate things his mother sends him. I might have chosen skates if I didn't know she had already given them to him."

She stared at me.

"I don't understand," she said. "He has no mother. He has no skates."



MARJORIE KINNAN RAWLINGS, born Marjorie Kinnan (accent on the second syllable, please) began life in Washington, D. C. Later her parents moved to Madison, Wisconsin, where Marjorie and her brother Arthur received their higher education at the University of Wisconsin. Apparently headed for a writing career from her earliest days, Marjorie Kinnan dabbled in literature even in high school and was graduated from the university covered with honors and ink, and decorated with a Phi Beta Kappa Key. Soon after her graduation she was married to Charles A. Rawlings, a well-known newspaper man and writer of short stories. Marriage in no way interfered with her writing which speedily found a steady and growing market.

While she was still in high school, Marjorie Kinnan sold short stories to pulp paper magazines. Her first book under the name Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings was the best seller *South Moon Under*. By the time that book appeared she was living in Florida and had become intensely interested in the people there. Her attention was attracted especially to those who lived in the solitary shacks and cabins, the unknown share croppers and their children — those Americans whom we are too tardily discovering. "Gal Young 'Un," one of her short stories about these people, received the O. Henry award for the best short story of the year in which it appeared, and *The Yearling* is considered one of the best American sectional novels.

Mrs. Rawlings lives in Florida in a beautiful old house set in an orange grove of ninety-six acres. Luckily she doesn't pick all the oranges herself, but saves her energy for the books and stories that continue to delight the reading public.

Character in the Making

A hero, we are told, is “a person of distinguished valor or fortitude.” Some heroes get Carnegie medals; some receive public recognition on radio programs or in the press; but all about us are people, apparently ordinary, whose heroic lives are utterly unrecognized by their neighbors. Charley Haskell’s boy was born to bitter poverty and ignorance. He had to learn the hard way; but, if ever there was a hero, John was one. Courage, independence, innate decency, and self-respect — these are the characteristics that made the American pioneer. John did not have to fight Indians or drive a covered wagon across the prairies, but he had the pioneer spirit just the same. He built for himself steppingstones out of dirt and ugliness and pulled his family after him, step by weary step. John isn’t the only hero in this story either.

JUDGE

by WALTER D. EDMONDS

When Charley Haskell died in the spring, he left a widow with nine children, a four-room house, a rickety barn, and a dollar owing from the Judge for the sale of a calf. The widow was a plain, honest, and fairly easy-going woman. She worked hard enough in the house to keep it and the children's clothes clean, but for outside things she had depended on her husband. For a few weeks after his death she apparently put her trust in God. Then she had a talk with John.

John was the oldest boy. The next oldest was only seven, and in between were girls. She told him, therefore, that it was up to him to take his father's place toward his brothers and sisters. They looked to him for their support, and she depended on him. She kissed him a little tearfully, and took up her existence again exactly where she had left it off when Charley died — as if by a few words, she had settled it in the accustomed grooves for an indefinite time.

The sight of her unexpected tears, however, had sobered John, so that he hung up his fishing pole and went out to look at the corn patch. He found it full of weeds. It was an unusual thing for him to get the hoe without being told to, but he did, and after he had cleaned the first row, he found that it looked much better when you could see the corn.

When he came in that night to supper, he had a quarter of the field hoed. He called his mother and sisters out to

see what he had done and listened with pride as they said that it looked nice. It was while his mother was looking at the corn that she remembered that they had never collected the dollar from the Judge for the calf. She told John that he had better get it that evening.

John was frightened at the idea of going to the Judge's house. In 1830, the settlement at High Falls was a poor place of small houses, which made the Judge's stone house seem like a palace. John, for one, had never seen the inside of it, but he had seen the curtains through the windows, and the oil lamps, when he went by at night, two or even three in the same room. For Judge Doane was the great man of the district. He owned a vast amount of land and held mortgages on most of the rest and had been representative of the county.

John's mother had brushed his coat for him, but even so, it looked very shabby and frayed and outgrown as he knocked on the front door and asked the hired girl if he could see the Judge. He had the feeling that it was an impertinence to ask a person like the Judge to pay a dollar, even when he owed it to you. He thought that probably the Judge would throw him out of the house. But his mother said they needed the dollar for flour, and at least he had to try to get it.

The maid came back for him and led him to the Judge's office, opened the door, and closed it behind him. John stood with his back to the door and his hat in both hands, a lanky, overgrown boy, with a thin, rather pale face, and brown frightened eyes. Compared to the Judge, he looked like someone made of splinters.

"Hello, John," said the Judge. "What do you want with me?"

He sounded not unfriendly, so John managed, after a couple of attempts, to say that he had come for the dollar for the calf.

"Oh, yes," said the Judge. "I'd forgotten about that. I'm sorry."

He got up from his leather armchair and went to his writing desk and took one end of his gold watch chain from the pocket of his well-filled, speckled waistcoat and unlocked a drawer. While his back was turned, John was able to see the room, with the impressive lace on the curtains of the windows, the silver plate hung on the chimney piece, and the fire on the hearth where the Judge burned wood just for the sake of seeing it burn.

The Judge relocked the drawer, replaced the key in his pocket, and handed John a dollar bill. He resumed his seat and told John to sit down for a minute. John did so, on the edge of the nearest chair.

"How are you making out?" asked the Judge.

"All right, I guess," said John. "I wouldn't have bothered you for this, only we had to have flour."

"That's all right," said the Judge slowly. "I should have remembered it. I didn't think of it because your father owed me money anyway."

"I didn't know that," said John. He couldn't think of anything to say. He only looked at the Judge and wondered how his father had had the nerve to borrow money from a man like him.

The Judge made an impressive figure before his fire. He was a massive man with a red face, strong white hair, and uncompromising light blue eyes. He was staring at John, too, rather curiously.

He nodded, after a while, and said, "He owed me forty dollars."

That was what John had wanted to know, but he was shocked at the amount of it. All he could think of to say was, "I didn't know that, sir."

"No," said the Judge, "probably not. He was a kind of cousin of my wife's, but we neither of us said much about it."

And after Mrs. Doane died he didn't come around much." His brows drew bushily together and he stared into the fire. "How old are you, son?" he asked.

John replied that he was sixteen.

The Judge went on to ask about the family, the age of each child, and what Charley Haskell had got planted that spring. John answered him everything, and as he did he felt a little more confidence. It seemed odd that anyone living in the High Falls settlement could know so little about anyone else. Why, he knew a lot more about the Judge than the Judge did about him. He told how high the corn stood. He said, "It stands as high as any I've seen around here, excepting yours, Judge. And now I've started looking out for it, maybe it will catch up."

The Judge said, "Hoeing is the best garden fertilizer in the world. And sweat is the next best thing to money."

"Yes, sir," said John. It made him feel proud that he had hoed so much of his corn that day. Tomorrow he'd really get after the piece.

"You can't live on potatoes and corn though," said the Judge. "What are you going to do?"

John was awed to be talking so familiarly to a man half the town was scared of; a man, it was said, who had even talked out in legislature down in Albany. But his face wrinkled and he managed to grin.

"Work, I guess, sir."

The Judge grunted then and stood up and dripped his quid into the sandbox.

"You do that and you'll take care of your family all right. Maybe you'll even pay back the forty dollars your father owed me." He held out his hand, which John hardly dared to take. "When do you suppose that'll be?"

John got white. "I don't know, sir."

The Judge smiled.

"I like that a lot better than easy promises, John."

He walked beside John into the hall, his meaty hand on John's shoulder.

"Good luck to you," he said from the front door.

During the summer John managed to get work from time to time, hiring out for as much as forty cents a day, sometimes as often as three days a week. At first he didn't have much luck getting jobs, for though he was a good deal stronger than he appeared to be and worked hard, people remembered his father and preferred getting other help when they could. Besides, in the 30's, there weren't many people in High Falls who could afford to hire help, even at forty cents a day; so, by working in the evenings and on Sundays also, John had ample time to take care of their corn and potatoes and the garden truck he had planted late himself.

He used to wonder how his father had ever been able to take life so easily. He wondered often how it was that he never had time to go fishing that summer. And the one or two times he did have the time, he thought of the forty dollars he owed Judge Doane, and he went out and looked for work. He even found occasional jobs at Greig, five miles up the river, and walked back and forth every morning and evening. Little by little, the forty dollars became an obsession with him, and though at first he had given all his earnings to his mother to spend, he now began to save out a few pennies here and there. When, at the end of August, he had saved out his first complete dollar and held it all at once in his hand, he realized that some day he might pay off the debt; and from there his mind went further, and he began to see that it was even possible that some day he would be able to build a decent house for his mother, perhaps even get married; perhaps, when the settlement became a town, as they said it would, get elected to the town board.

By the middle of October, John had saved up enough

money to see the family through the winter, as he calculated it, for besides his secret bit, he had persuaded his mother to lay by some of what he gave her. Further, she had been moved by the sight of a decent garden to preserve some beans and also some berries that the girls had gathered, especially since it was the first time in several years that she had felt able to buy sugar ahead of the immediate demand. The potato piece had yielded forty bushels of potatoes ; and the corn, which John had sold, had brought in a few dollars more.

The day before he finished cutting the winter wood supply, John counted up his money and decided he would make the first payment on the forty-dollar debt to the Judge that night. It amounted to five dollars, even, but to John that seemed a great deal.

He went up to the big house when he felt sure that the Judge would have finished his supper ; and he had the same business of knocking and waiting in the hall while the maid took his name in. He found the Judge sitting as he had found him the first time, only the fire was about two logs bigger.

“ Sit down, John,” said the Judge, “ and tell me what I can do for you.”

John obviously did not know how to begin his business properly, and after watching him under his brows for a moment, the Judge continued in his gruff voice, “ I may as well tell you I’ve kind of kept my eye on you this summer, John. I like the way you’ve taken hold. I’m willing to admit, too, that I was kind of surprised. And I’ll be glad to help you out.”

John flushed right up to his hair.

“ I didn’t come to ask for anything, Judge.” He fished in his pocket and pulled out his coins. His hands were stiffly clumsy. Some of the coins fell to the floor and one rolled musically all the way under the desk. As he went on

his knees to retrieve it, John wished he had had the sense to tie them together instead of jingling them loosely in his pocket all the way up. He couldn't bear to look at the Judge when he handed him the coins. He said, "I wanted to pay something back on that forty dollars, sir. It's only five dollars, even." The Judge had to cup his two hands. "Maybe you'd count it, sir." But it didn't look like so much in the Judge's hands.

The Judge, however, said, "Quite right, John," and counted up the money. Then he went to his desk, put the money in a drawer, and wrote out a receipt which he gave to John.

"Yes, sir," said John, wondering what it was.

The Judge looked grave.

"That's a receipt, John. It says you've paid me back five dollars."

John wondered.

"Why," he said, "it's kind of like money, ain't it?"

"In a way," said the Judge, shaking hands. "What are you going to do this winter, John?"

"I don't know, sir. I tried to get a job from Brown at the hotel, splitting firewood, but he's hired Ance instead. Mr. Freel's got all the help he needs at the tannery."

Those were about the only winter jobs in High Falls a man could hope to find. The Judge nodded and said, "I'd offer you something if it didn't mean getting rid of someone else, John. I couldn't rightly do that."

"No, sir," John said, and started home.

But somehow, he felt so happy all the way home that when he reached the house and found his mother sitting up in the kitchen, he couldn't help telling her the whole business. He blurred it all out — the way he had saved a little now and then until he had actually got five dollars. And then he showed her the receipt.

His mother didn't say a word as she looked at the receipt,

but her head gradually bent farther and farther forward, and all at once she started crying. John could not understand at first. Finally she lifted her face to him.

“Oh, John, why did you do that?”

“I wanted to pay off that debt Pa laid up,” he said, uneasily. “Ain’t that all right?”

“I guess it is, John. But why didn’t you tell me first?”

“I kind of wanted to surprise you,” he mumbled. “I didn’t mean for to make you feel bad, Ma.”

“It ain’t that, John.”

“But ain’t I give you enough?”

“Oh, yes. You’ve done fine, John. But the way you’ve been working has made me kind of different. I got to thinking people talked to us different now. I never thought about that before.”

As he thought it over during the next two or three days, John felt all torn up in his chest. He began to see that by starting to be respectable, he had done more than just work for himself. He had done something to his mother, too. And now, by going through with it, he had put her back where she used to be. It did not seem logical, but that was how it was.

Perhaps he would have fallen back then and there to his old ways of letting the world slide, if he hadn’t met Seth one evening at the blacksmith’s, where he had gone to get the big cook kettle mended. Seth was there, too, having Jorgen do some work on a few of his beaver traps.

Seth was an Indian. In summer he worked in the saw-mills when it occurred to him to do so, but in winter he went into the north woods. People distrusted Seth. They did not like the way he smelled. Even in the forge you could smell him, greasy sweet, through his thick tobacco smoke.

He said he was planning to go north in about two weeks. He was late, but the winter looked slow. He thought the

furs would be coming up pretty quick though. Better than last year. Last year he had cleared only two hundred dollars.

"Two hundred dollars," thought John. He wondered how a man like Seth could spend all that. All he knew was that the Indian took it to Utica every spring. He supposed there were places in such a big town that an Indian could go to. Two hundred dollars.

He turned shyly to the Indian.

"How much does a man need to get traps and food for the winter?" he asked.

The Indian turned his brown face. He wasn't amused, or he did not show it if he was.

"Sev'nty-five dollar, maybe. You got a gun?"

John nodded.

"Seventy-five dollars," he thought. He knew only one person who could stake him that much.

The Indian asked, "You going?"

"Maybe," said John.

"You come wit' me. Good range over mine. Plenty room us both. I help you make a cabin."

"I'll see."

It was almost 10:30 at night when he got to the Judge's. He had made up his mind he would ask the Judge, if there was a downstairs light still on when he got there. If not, he wouldn't.

The house was dark on the town side, but when John went round to the office window, his heart contracted to see that the Judge was still up. He tapped on the window. The Judge did not start. He got slowly up and came to the window and opened it to the frosty night. When he saw the boy's white face and large eyes, he said harshly, "What do you want?"

"Please, Judge," said John, "could I talk to you?"

"It's damned late," said the Judge, staring with his cold

blue eyes for a while. Then he shut the window, and presently opened the front door. He was looking a little less threatening by then, but he wasn't looking friendly.

"Be as quick as you can," he said, when they were back in the office.

John was as white as a person could be. His tongue stuttered.

"I wanted to ask you something, Judge. But if you don't like it, say so plain. It's about me and getting to trap this winter, on account of that five dollars I paid you." He couldn't think decently straight.

The Judge barked at him.

"Talk plain, boy! Begin at the beginning. What's the five dollars got to do with it?"

John began to talk. He repeated what had happened with his mother, how she felt, how odd it seemed to him, but there it was. The Judge began to sit less stiffly. He even nodded. "Women are the devil," he observed. "You want to take back that money?"

"No, no, I don't," John said desperately. "But people don't like giving me work yet, and I want ma to feel respectable. I thought if you could make a stake to go trapping."

"How much?"

"Seth said seventy-five dollars," he almost whispered. "But I guess I could get along with fifty. I'd get the traps and some powder and ball, and I could go light on the food. I don't eat a great lot and I'm a handy shot, Judge."

"Seventy-five dollars," said the Judge. "You're asking me to lend that much to a sixteen-year-old boy, just like that?"

His red face was particularly heavy-looking.

"I'd make it on fifty," said John, "but it was just an idea. If you don't think it's all right, I won't bother you any more."

"Then you want the five back, too, I suppose — makes it eighty. And forty is a hundred and twenty."

"It would be ninety-five, wouldn't it, if you give me fifty?"

"Shut up," barked the Judge. "If I'm going to stake you I'll do it so I'll have a chance of getting my money back. It won't pay me to send you in with so little you'll starve to death before spring, will it?"

John could only gape.

"How about this Seth?" asked the Judge. "He's a drunken brute. Can you trust him?"

"I've met him in the woods," said John. "He's always been nice to me."

The Judge grumbled. He got up and took five dollars from his desk and gave it to John.

"You bring me back that receipt tomorrow night," was all he said.

When John gave the money to his mother, it made her so happy that he felt wicked to feel so miserable himself. It seemed as if all his summer's work had been burned with one spark. And he was frightened to go next night to the Judge's house. But he went.

The Judge only kept him a moment.

He took the receipt and gave John another paper.

"Put a cross in the right-hand bottom corner," he directed; and when John had done so, "That is a receipt for seventy-five dollars. Here's the money. Don't lose it going home."

He walked John to the door and shook hands.

"Good luck. Come here next spring as soon as you get back."

"Thanks," was all John could say.

The Judge made a harsh noise in his throat and fished a chew from his pocket.

"Good-by," he said.

John got Seth to help select his outfit. The Indian enjoyed doing that. And John felt so proud over his new traps,

his powder flask and bullet pouch, and his big basket of provisions, and he felt so grateful to the Indian that he offered to buy him a drink out of the two-shilling bit he had left.

"No drink," said the Indian. "Next spring, oh, yes."

He shared his canoe with John up the Moose River, and they spent two weeks getting in to Seth's range. They dumped his stuff in the little log cabin and moved over the range together to the one Seth had selected for John. There they laid up a small cabin just like the Indian's, and built a chimney. They had trouble finding clay to seal the cracks, for by then the frost was hard and snow coming regularly each afternoon.

Then the Indian took John with him while he laid out his own lines, and, after two days, went with John, showing him what to start on. After that the Indian spent all his spare time making John snowshoes. He finished them just in time for the first heavy snow.

John learned a great deal from Seth that fall. First of all he learned that an Indian in the woods is a much different person from the Indian imitating white men. He had always liked Seth, but he had never suspected his generosity and good humor. Even when the snow got heavy, the Indian paid him a weekly visit and asked him back to his cabin in return.

He learned how to make pens for beaver under water and ice, and sink fresh twigs, and when the younger beaver swam in, to drop the closing pole and let them drown. He never got as good as Seth had, as a still-hunting fisher. But Seth said, either you could do that or you could not; there was no shame in not being able.

But John did well. Early in March his bale of furs had mounted up so well that he had Seth come over and appraise them. The Indian said he had more than two hundred dol-

lars' worth. It would depend on the market. By the end of the month he might have two hundred and fifty dollars' worth.

The snow went down quickly, but the ice held. John began to be eager to leave. He wanted to show his furs. He would be able to pay off the Judge, not only the stake but the share, and also the debt, and he would have a few dollars to start the summer on. Next winter he would make a clear profit. He would put money in the bank.

He went over to Seth's and told him he would start next week. He could not bear to wait, and if he went early he could get across the Moose River on the ice somewhere. The Indian said, "Yes," but he begged John to wait. There was still two weeks for the fur to hold up well, and he had sometimes made some lucky catches in March.

But John's heart was set on going. He couldn't put his mind on trapping any more. He had done so well already. So finally Seth agreed to come over and help him pack his furs and traps. They had a big feed on about the last of John's grub.

In the morning he set out and the Indian walked with him to the end of his own south line, and shook hands.

"You one damn good boy, John," he said unexpectedly. "You come again next year."

"I will sure," said John. "Thanks for all you've done for me, Seth. Without you I wouldn't have done this." He hitched the heavy pack up on his shoulder. "I guess next the Judge, you're about the best friend I ever had."

The Indian's brown face wrinkled all over beneath his battered hat. He made a big gesture with his hand.

"Oh, sure," he said. "Big country. Nice company. Plenty furs us both."

He held John's hand.

He said, "Now listen to Seth. If creeks open, you cut two

logs crossing. You mind Seth. You cut two logs. One log roll. Two logs safe crossing water."

"Yes, sure," said John. He wanted to get away. The sun was well up by now.

"'By," said Seth.

John walked hard. He felt strong that morning. He felt like a grown man. The weight of the pack, galling his shoulders, was a pleasure to carry.

Every time he eased it one way or another, he thought about what it was going to mean. He thought about coming home and telling his mother. He would buy her a new dress. He would make a purchase of some calico for his sisters. "Make a purchase," he thought, was quite a mouthful. He'd never even thought of it before.

He would see the Judge. He imagined himself walking into the Judge's office and dropping the pack on the floor, and looking the Judge in the eye. He realized that that meant more to him than doing things for his family.

He remembered the way he had started the winter. He had got Seth to estimate the worth of each first pelt. When they had figured up to forty dollars, he had made a bundle of them. They were still packed together in the bottom of the pack. It seemed to him that getting that first forty dollars' worth was twice as much of a job as all the rest for him to have done.

The snow was a little slushy here and there, but it held up well in the big woods and he made pretty good time. Nights, he set himself up a lean-to of cedar and balsam branches, and sitting before his small fire, he would think ahead a few years. He could see himself some day, pretty near like the Judge. He even figured on teaching himself to read and write — write his own name, anyway. No matter how you

looked at it, you couldn't make a cross seem like "John Haskell" wrote out in full, with big and little letters in it.

Mornings, he started with the first gray light, when the mist was like a twilight on the water and the deer moused along the runways and eyed him, curious as chipmunks. He walked south down the slopes of the hills across the shadows of the sunrise, when the snow became full of color and the hills ahead wore a bloody purple shadow on their northern faces.

Now and then he heard the first stirring of a small brook under the snow in a sunny place, and he found breath holes under falls wide open.

He had grown taller during the winter, and he seemed even lankier, but his eyes were still the brown, boy's eyes of a year ago.

He crossed the Moose River on the ice about where McKeever now is, just at dusk. He had not made as good time that day. The snow had been a good deal softer and his legs ached and the pack weighed down a bit harder than usual. But though the ice had been treacherous close to shore, he had found a place easily enough.

That night, however, as he lay in his lean-to, he heard the river ice begin to work. It went out in the morning with a grinding roar and built a jam half a mile below his camp.

He saw it with a gay heart as he set out after breakfast. It seemed to him as if it were the most providential thing he ever had heard of. If he had waited another day, before starting, he would have found the river open and he would have had to go back to Seth's cabin and wait till the Indian was ready to come out. But as it was, now, he would have only brooks to cross.

There were a good many of them, and most of them were opening. But he found places to cross them, and he had no trouble till afternoon, when he found some running full. They were high with black snow water, some of them so

high that he had to go upstream almost a mile to find a place where he could fell a bridge across.

Each time he dropped two logs and went over easily enough. But each time the delay chafed him a little more. By late afternoon, when he was only five miles from High Falls and began to recognize his landmarks, he came to what he knew was the last creek.

It was a strong stream, with a great force of water, and it was boiling full. Where John happened on it, it began a slide down the steep bank for the river, with one bend and then a straight chute. But it was narrow there, and beside where he stood grew a straight hemlock long enough to reach across.

Hardly stopping to unload his pack, John set to work with his ax. The tree fell nicely, just above the water. There was no other tree close by, but John thought about that only for a moment. It was the last creek, he was almost home, and his heart was set on getting there that night. Besides, he had had no trouble on the other crossings. He was sure-footed, and in every case he had run across one log.

He gave the tree a kick, but it lay steady, and suddenly he made up his mind to forget what Seth had said. He could get over easy enough and see the Judge that evening.

With his furs on his back, his ax in one hand and his gun in the other, he stepped out on the log. It felt solid as stone under his feet and he went along at a steady pace. The race of water just under the bark meant nothing to John. His head was quite clear and his eyes were on the other side already, and he thought, in his time, he had crossed a lot of logs more rickety than this one.

It was just when he was halfway over that the log rolled without any warning and pitched John into the creek.

The water took hold of him and lugged him straight down and rolled him over and over like a dead pig. He had no chance even to yell. He dropped his gun and ax at the first

roll and instinctively tugged at the traps which weighted him so. As he struggled to the top, he felt the fur pack slip off. He made a desperate grab at them, but they went away. When he finally washed up on the bend and crawled out on the snow, he hadn't a thing left but his life.

That seemed worthless to him, lying on the snow. He could not even cry about it.

He lay there for perhaps half an hour while the dusk came in on the river. Finally he got his feet and searched downstream poking with a stick along the bottom. But he was hopeless. The creek ran like a millrace down the slope for the river and the chances were a hundred to one that the traps as well as the furs had been taken by the strength of water and the slide all the way down to the river.

But he continued his search till nearly dark before he gave up.

By the time he reached High Falls, he had managed to get back just enough of his courage to go straight to the Judge. It was very late, but the office light was still burning, and John knocked and went in. He stood on the hearth, shivering and dripping, but fairly erect, and told the Judge exactly what had happened, even to Seth's parting admonition, in a flat, low voice.

The Judge said never a word till the boy was done. He merely sat studying him from under his bushy white brows. Then he got up and fetched him a glass of whisky.

Though the drink seemed to bring back a little life, it only made John more miserable. He waited like a wavering ghost for the Judge to have his say.

But the Judge only said in his heavy voice, " You'd better go on home. You'd better start hunting work tomorrow." His voice became gruffer: " Everybody has to learn things. It's been bad luck for us both that you had to learn it like this."

John went home. All he could remember was that the

Judge had said it was bad luck for them both. It seemed to him that that was a very kind thing for the Judge to say

John did not see anything of the Judge that summer. He worked hard, planting corn and potatoes and the garden, and later he managed to find work. He seemed to get work more easily that summer. But his family seemed to need more money. Now and then people visited a little, and that meant extra money for food and tea. By working hard, though, John found himself in the fall about where he had been on the preceding year.

He had put in a bid with the tannery for winter work and had had the job promised to him. Two days before he would have started, however, the Judge sent word for him to come to the big house.

The Judge made him sit down.

“John,” he said, “you’ve kept your courage up when it must have been mighty hard. I’ve been thinking about you and me. I think the best thing for us both, the best way I can get my money back, is to give you another stake, if you’re willing to go.”

John felt that he was much nearer crying than he had been when he lost his furs. He hardly found the voice to say that he would go.

Seth, for no good reason, had decided to move west in the state, so John had to go into the woods alone. But he had good luck that winter, better even than he had had the year before. He stayed right through to the end of the season, and his pack was so heavy he had to leave his traps behind.

The river was open when he reached it, so he had to ferry himself over on a raft. It took a day to build. And from that point on he took plenty of time when he came to the creeks, and dropped two logs over them, and made a trial trip over and back without his fur pack. It took

him three extra days coming out, but he brought his furs with him.

The Judge saw to it that he got good prices; and when the dealer was done with the buying, John was able to pay the Judge for both stakes and for the forty dollars as well. The year after that he made a clear profit.

John did well in the world. He found time to learn to read and write and handle figures. From time to time he visited the Judge, and he found that the Judge was not a person anyone needed to be afraid of. When the Judge died in John's thirtieth year, John was owner of Freel's tannery and one of the leading men of High Falls.

It is a simple story, this of John Haskell's, but it is not quite done. When the Judge died and the will was read, it was found that he had left to John Haskell the big house and a share of his money. There was also a sealed letter for John.

That night in his house, John opened the letter. It was dated the same day as the one on which John had received the money for his first pack of furs. It was just a few lines long and it contained forty dollars in bills.

Dear John: Here is the forty dollars, and I am making you a confession with it. I liked your looks when you came to me that first time. I thought you had stuff in you. It was a dirty thing to do, in a way, but I wanted to make sure of you. I never liked your father and I would never lend him a cent. I invented that debt. Good luck, John.



WALTER D. EDMONDS is a well-known name in these days. He is the Washington Irving of the Erie Canal. Since the immortal Ichabod Crane and Rip Van Winkle, New York State had not figured any too prominently in historical fiction, but when Mr. Edmonds fixed his vivid

imagination upon the romantic possibilities of upstate New York, the Erie Canal, and The Mohawk Trail, he was at once rewarded by enthusiastic public approval. All of his books have been best sellers: *Rome Haul*, *The Big Barn*, *Erie Water*, *Drums Along the Mohawk*, and *Chad Hanna*. They are not only the fruit of intelligent and painstaking research, but they have that informal, readable quality that makes for popularity.

Mr. Edmonds lives in Boonville, New York, near Utica. He was born there in 1903, and his family has lived there for generations. He knows the country thoroughly and knows the quality of the people, too — their stubborn pride, their heroic acceptance of the inevitable, their humor, their stern justice, their frequent pettiness, and their large sympathy. The naturalness of his stories makes them good material for the movies. *Rome Haul* became popular as "The Farmer Takes a Wife," and *Chad Hanna*, another favorite, was produced in technicolor.

While he was at Harvard, Mr. Edmonds wrote his first short story, which appeared in *Scribner's Magazine*. Like *Rome Haul*, it was about the Erie Canal. Since then, in addition to his longer works, he has published many short stories dealing with contemporary or pioneer days in New York State. "Judge" appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post*.

A Little Town in Iowa

Family loyalty is a curious thing. You may quarrel frequently and noisily with your brothers and sisters, but just let someone outside the family criticize one of them and you are ready to defend him to the death, although you may have been offering him physical violence yourself the moment before. You may disregard your parents' advice even to the point of downright disobedience, but you would be quick to resent the slightest disparaging remark about either of them. A boy's sense of protective loyalty toward his mother is particularly strong, even when the boy is as young and inexperienced as Gerald Rayburn. When his father died, Gerald straightened his shoulders to carry the new burden of responsibility and got himself a job in a grocery store. Ruth Suckow tells about his first day at work in "The Man of the Family."

THE MAN OF THE FAMILY

by RUTH SUCKOW

Floyd Oberholzer was just opening up the drugstore when Gerald came.

“Hello, Gerald. Want something?”

“I come to start in working.”

“This morning!” Floyd was startled. “Why, school can’t be over yet, is it? What is this—Wednesday?”

“Yes, but we got done with our tests yesterday, all but arithmetic, and I didn’t have to take that.”

“Oh, you didn’t have to take that?” Floyd repeated vaguely. “Well, you come into the store and we’ll see what there is for you to do.”

Gerald followed him into the drugstore.

Floyd looked around somewhat helplessly. It was only a few months since he and Lois had bought this little business in Independenceville. They knew what to do themselves, but it was a different matter setting someone else to work. They hadn’t expected Gerald so soon, or wanted him. Two or three months ago, he had come into the store to ask if he couldn’t have a job, and because they hated to turn the kid away—it wasn’t very long after the accident in which his father had been killed—Floyd had told him: “Well, you come around when school’s out. Maybe we can find something then.” And now he was here.

“Well, you’re starting in early,” Floyd said to him. “You’ve beat my wife—she isn’t in the store yet. Well,

I don't know, Gerald — I guess you might as well sweep out, the first thing." He remembered then that Lois had swept the store before they closed last night; the boys had left so many cigarette stubs around. But he guessed it could stand it again. It would keep Gerald busy while Floyd decided what to have him do.

"All right," Gerald answered soberly. "Where do you keep your broom?"

"Right out there in the back, Gerald. See — I'll show you. Then you'll know where it is."

Gerald started in to sweep the wooden floor with awkward, scowling concentration. His back was stooped and intent. He took long hard strokes, trying to do a good job of it. Floyd looked at him, and then turned and went scuttling up the stairs.

"Hey — Lois!" he called softly.

"'Smatter, pop?"

Lois, still in her bungalow apron, came to the door of the kitchen. The Oberholzers were living over the drug-store.

"Say, that kid's here."

"What kid?"

"Gerald Rayburn. He's come to start in working. Seems awful anxious to begin. What in the dickens shall I have him do?"

"You're a fine boss!" Lois began to laugh. "What's he doing now — standing in the middle of the floor and sucking his thumb?"

"I've got him sweeping."

"Why, I swept last night, you idiot!"

"Well, I know you did, but I forgot it. I didn't want to tell him to stand around. He goes at it like a little beaver. You ought to watch him. Oh, I suppose the kid is anxious to start in earning."

Lois didn't know what to say.

"You come down," said Floyd, "and tell him about the soda fountain. That's your end of the business."

"Oh, it is, is it? All right, I'll come down and give the boss's orders since he doesn't know what they are himself," she replied with mock commiseration and pinched Floyd's ear.

"Well, gosh, I didn't expect that kid the minute school let out! Most kids aren't anxious to go to work. Isn't this the day they have the school picnic? Why, sure—that's why we got that pop."

He started down the stairs and then went back to the next-to-the-top step and stood frowning uncertainly.

"Think we can really use him, Lois?"

"Well, I guess we've got him, anyway!"

"I know we'll have to have somebody, but he's such a kid. I don't know—"

Lois said hastily, "Oh, well, let's try him. You told him he could come. I feel so sorry for that family."

"Well, so do I. But then . . . Well, all right. . . ."

Floyd left it at that, and scuttled down the stairs again. Lois went back to the kitchen which she herself had painted blue and white, with figured curtains, changing it from the gloomy old hole that the Tewksburys had left it to a gay new room. She hated to leave this beloved little place to go and help Floyd in the store. Now that they had hired just a little boy to help them for the summer, she supposed she would have to be downstairs most of the time. She almost wished she hadn't told Floyd to keep Gerald. Well, if Gerald couldn't do the work, he'd have to go, that was all.

"All right, Gerald," Floyd went into the store saying loudly and cheerfully. "Finished that? Well, then, I guess you'd better—" His eyes, quickly roving, caught sight of the magazine rack. "I guess you'd better straighten

up those magazines. Folks take 'em out and read 'em all through and then put 'em back."

"All right."

Floyd whistled as he took the long gray cambric covers off the tables in the middle of the room, where boxes of gilt-edged correspondence cards and leather-bound copies of the works of Edgar Guest had to be displayed until the graduating exercises were over. Gerald went at his work with such silent concentration that it almost embarrassed Floyd.

"What do you want I should do next?"

"Oh, well . . . Guess maybe I better show you about these cigarettes and tobacco. That's probably what they'll be after first. I'll show you how we've got things marked."

"All right."

Lois came down. Floyd gave her an expressive look and nodded toward Gerald. "He's right at it!" Certainly the boy seemed to be trying hard. His freckled face with the crop of red hair was surly with concentration. Floyd couldn't help remembering that he was just a kid and too young to be starting in to work in earnest. He was quite willing to give up his charge and let Lois initiate him into the mysteries of the new white soda fountain which they had installed in place of the cracked, lugubrious onyx splendor of an earlier day. Gerald stood silently beside Lois, bashfully aware of her bobbed hair and her plump white arms, answering dutifully, "Yes, ma'am."

"You can watch me this morning, Gerald, and run some errands, maybe. Wash up the glasses. Do the dirty work — how's that?"

"Yes, ma'am."

He was a little clumsy, partly out of bashfulness, but so serious and determined that Lois thought, "Goodness, I wonder if it'll last!" She wanted to give him all the help

he needed, but she didn't quite know what to make of his surly little face. He hated to ask her questions, and several times she had to say, "Oh, not like that, Gerald!"

II

"Gee, that was an awful thing to happen to that family!" Floyd said to Lois in the back room of the store, where he had gone to look for a special package of hog medicine ordered by old Gus Reinbeck. "I think this kid kind of realizes, don't you?"

"Have they got anything, do you suppose?"

"A little insurance, they say, and that house, but not much more than to keep them until this boy can start earning."

"The mother can earn something herself, I should think," Lois said rather defiantly. *She* worked.

"Yes, but with three kids to look after. . . . And anyway, what is there for a woman to do in a burg like this except take in washing?"

"Well, maybe."

Back door and front of the store were open, and through the shimmery blackness of the back screen the garden was green and fresh. A tin cup hung on an old-fashioned pump under the vines. Gerald looked longingly at the boards of the platform, wet with spilled water. There was city water in the soda fountain, but the pump looked so much cooler out there. "Run out and get a drink if you want to, Gerald," Lois told him. "I always go out there for my water. It's fun to work the pump" Boys never could see a pump or a drinking fountain or even a hydrant without being consumed with thirst, she knew. Lois liked boys. Gerald made her think of her kid brother. It was a shame he had to go to work. She wanted to reassure him somehow, to rumple his red hair or pat his shoulder. But she must remember that they were hiring him. They couldn't

afford to keep him out of pity. Besides, he seemed determined to evade all personal advances and stuck doggedly to work. Maybe the kid was miserable at missing that picnic.

It was getting hot in town. Cars began to rattle and whir down the street, and in a few moments Louie Grossman's big red truck drove up to the side door of the drug-store.

“ Hey, Floyd! Got the pop? ”

“ Got the pop? You bet I've got the pop. You want it now? ”

“ Sure do, if it's goin' on this picnic.”

“ All right, sir! Want to come and help me take it out, Gerald? ”

“ All right.”

Gerald went with Floyd into the back room of the store, bright and cool and scattered with light from the green leaves outside. He tugged at one end of the big pop case and helped Floyd carry it outside and shove it into the truck.

“ Now, another one, Gerald.”

“ All right.”

“ Well, the kids oughtn't to get thirsty today,” Floyd said.

“ No, they sure got plenty. What are you doing, Gerald? ” Louie asked. “ Ain't you going to the picnic? ”

“ I got to work,” Gerald answered.

He went back into the store. The two men looked after him. . .

“ He workin' for you now, Floyd? ”

“ Guess so. It looks like it. He came this morning.”

“ Goes at it pretty good, don't he? ”

“ Yes, he seems to be willing. He's pretty young, but then . . . Where they going for the picnic today, Louie? ”

“ Out to Bailey's Creek. You ever been there? ”

"Not yet. Mighty pretty place, I guess," he added.

"Yes, but it ain't much of a road."

"Well, don't tip 'em out, Louie."

"No, I'll try and keep the old bus in her tracks."

Louie started the noisy engine of the big truck. It went roaring up the street between green lawns and white houses and pink peonies to where the school children, boys in freshly ironed blouses and girls in summery dresses, waited in a flock under the elms of the schoolyard . . . then out, spinning down the graveled highway between freshly planted fields, turning into the little woods road, narrow and rutted, where the children had to bend their heads under the switch of honey locusts that left small white petals in their sun-warmed hair . . . on into the depths of green woods through the heart of which the shining creek was flowing . . .

Lois had come to the doorway to watch the truck leave.

"I wouldn't mind going to a picnic myself on a day like this," she murmured.

When she went back into the store, she looked curiously at Gerald. It gave her a guilty feeling, wholly unreasonable, to have him at work in their store today when it was a holiday for all the other children. But he had come of his own accord. They hadn't told him to do it.

"Did your sisters go on the picnic, Gerald?" she asked.

"Yes, *they* went," he answered, rather slightlying.

"How many have you, Gerald? Just Juanita and Betty?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"And you're the only boy?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"You could have started in tomorrow just as well, Gerald."

He did not answer.

III

The bright morning grew hotter and hotter, until to enter the drugstore from the glaring cement outside was like going into a cool, clean-scented cavern. The regular set of loafers drifted in, asked for tobacco, and stayed, sitting on the white-topped stools at the soda fountain and trying to be facetious with Gerald. "Well, you got a new clerk?" everyone who came in demanded. It was a new joke every time. In an interval of no customers, Lois stooped down and drew out a pale green bottle frosted over with cold moisture from the case under the counter. It was still a treat to her to think she owned a store.

"I'm going to try some of this new lime stuff," she said. "See how it tastes. Don't you want the other straw, Gerald?"

"No, I guess not," he answered bashfully.

There was a glint of longing and reluctance in his eyes. But Lois thought: Maybe I oughtn't to start offering him things and being too easy with him. After all, Floyd was paying him to help them, and it wasn't her fault that his father had been killed. They were doing the best they could for him by letting him have a job. When, later, she decided to try one of those chocolates Floyd had ordered from a new traveling man, she turned her back while she nibbled it and wiped her fingers on the scrap of oiled paper in which it had been wrapped. Running the business all by themselves was still an adventure to the young Oberholzers; but even now they had run up against the fact more than once that it wasn't just a game. They had halfway discovered the meaning of that term—"If you want to do business—" Lois couldn't pick out from the traveling man's stock the delicately scented toilet waters that she herself liked, but had to choose the red and green brands with big gaudy flowers on the labels that the girls here in town would buy—the

kind that "went." She had had to freeze out old Bart Bailey who came in every morning to read the paper and the detective magazines he had no money to buy, and left dirty thumb marks on all the pages.

Noon came with the shriek of the whistle from the power-house, with the noise of cars being started and of the men driving home to dinner.

"When does your mamma expect you home for dinner, Gerald?" Lois asked.

"Oh, I guess it don't matter," Gerald mumbled bashfully.

"Didn't you tell her when you'd come?"

"No, ma'am."

They let him go; but if they kept him in the store, he would have to go later and let them have their dinner at noon. That was one reason why they wanted help. He was back in good time. "Well, didn't take *you* long to eat your dinner!" Floyd said. But maybe it wasn't a good thing to act surprised at his promptness. It would wear off soon enough, if they could infer anything from their experiences with Marcelle Johnston, who had pretended to work for them for three weeks in the winter.

At intervals during the afternoon, Floyd and Lois reported to each other. "We're going to have an awful time teaching him to make a decent sundae. He doesn't catch on any too fast, but he seems to be willing to do whatever you tell him." Whether they wanted to keep him or no, it was evident that he meant to stay. He wanted the job. His surly little freckled face scarcely relaxed into a smile even when there was a dog fight outside and Miss Angie Robinson's little poodle sent that big hound of Ole Swanson's off yelping. He went at whatever he was told to do with 'dogged earnestness, although he didn't see things for himself. He said "Yes, ma'am" with sober respect; but he would ask:

"What's the price of this here kind of tobacco, Lois?" and say to customers: "No, Floyd ain't in just now, he went over

to the depot" As the afternoon wore along, his freckled face grew flushed. "Does it seem like a long day, Gerald?" Lois asked him once. He admitted: "Kind of. Not so very."

Late in the afternoon, the picnic trucks came rattling into town with all the children disheveled and shouting. A few moments afterwards, a group of girls came bursting into the store. Their bright-colored summer dresses were wrinkled, their bobs were wildly rumpled, their tired eyes were shining.

"Oh, gee, but we're thirsty! We're just dying! Oh, look at Gerald Rayburn! Are you working in here, Gerald?"

"Yes, didn't you know he was?" his young sister Juanita asked. "We want six bottles of pop, Gerald," she ordered airily.

"Have you got any money?"

"Yes, I have!"

"Where'd you get it then?" he demanded suspiciously.

"None of your business, Mr. Smarty! I guess it's not yours, is it?"

A bright pink flared up in Juanita's cheeks. Her eyes sparkled angrily. She was a pretty child, with red hair like Gerald's, blazing out in a fuzzy aureole around her freckled face. She flounced down into one of the white chairs. "We want a table, don't we, kids? We don't want to sit at the fountain, like the boys." When Gerald brought the six cold red bottles carefully toppling on the tray, she lifted her little chin and disdained to look at him.

"You needn't think because I'm working here, you can come in and order what you want," he told her.

"Shut up!" she whispered furiously.

Her eyes were brighter still with tears. Mamma had given her the nickel for helping with the ironing yesterday afternoon instead of going off with the girls. She had given it to her for ironing Julie Bronson's pink chemise, with all the lace, so beautifully. It was none of Gerald's business

what she did with it! She said to the other girls, with flashing eyes and quivering lips:

“ He thinks he’s so smart now just because he’s starting in to work and Betty and I aren’t. You’d just think he *owned* us to hear the way he talks. I don’t care. I guess he isn’t the only one who does anything. I guess I do lots of things. I’d like to see Gerald Rayburn ever wash the dishes! ”

She stuck two straws into her bottle of strawberry pop and sucked it all up defiantly. Maybe she ought to have saved her nickel, but Gerald had no right trying to boss her in front of all the girls.

He told her, when she was leaving the store:

“ You needn’t go running around now, you can go home and help mamma.”

“ You keep still! ” She threw her nickel down with a ring on the white counter of the soda fountain. “ I guess you aren’t my boss *yet!* ”

“ That’s all right, I know what I’m talking about.”

“ That’s right, Gerald,” old Hod Brumskill shouted, with humorous approval. “ You make the womenfolks mind you. Ain’t that so, boys? ”

“ You tell ‘em it’s so! ”

They laughed loudly; and then, clustered together with their arms on the glass counter, that had a sign in red letters “ Do not lean! ” they tore open their packages of bitter-scented tobacco and began to talk in lowered voices about the Rayburn family: how it had been “ left,” how it got along, about the tragic death of Frank Rayburn, still disputing over the minutiae of that event which they had never yet been able to settle, although nearly a year had passed since the thing happened. “ Well, I never could understand how a fella like that, that was used to climbin’ all over everywhere, come to fall off that ladder like that—.” “ Why, he just kinda stepped backward-like—I s’pose he forgot maybe where he was at—.” ‘ Some says the ladder broke and let

him down." "Naw, the ladder didn't *break*." "Well, was it true he'd been out drinkin' the night before? That's how I heard it." "Naw, he hadn't been out drinkin' the night *before*." "Well, I can't figger out—." "Why, he just kinda stepped backwards—." It was terrible, they all agreed with solemn faces, to think that poor little woman should have been left with those three children, although there was dispute again about how much they had been left *with*. Some said they "had something," some said they "had nothing." She was a nice woman. Yes, and she was a good-looking woman, too . . . And then they drew closer together, and one of them said something about "Art Fox," and their voices broke into a laugh and a snicker.

Gerald was washing glasses at the soda fountain. His freckled face flushed a dull red, and when they snickered he looked over at them furiously. He had a notion of what they were saying. When they passed him, leaving the store, they praised him loudly and self-consciously.

"Well, Gerald, you're all right, ain't you? Takin' right a-hold!"

"You bet he's all right."

"Well, Gerald's the man now, ain't that so, Gerald! He's the one."

"That's right."

The six o'clock whistle blew.

Gerald looked about hesitatingly for Floyd. Finally he went out to the back room of the store to find him.

"Shall I go now? The whistle blew."

"Yes, sure, you go along now, Gerald. I wasn't paying any attention."

Floyd was busy over some boxes on the floor. Gerald hesitated. His face was red. He wanted to ask if he had "done all right." But he was ashamed. Finally he blurted:

"Do you want I should come back tomorrow morning?"

Floyd was still busy over the boxes. Gerald waited.

"Yes, you come back in the morning, Gerald," Floyd answered cheerfully.

IV

Gerald got out of the store as fast as he could. How bright the street seemed outside, and how fresh the air was! He felt as if he had been smelling camphor and perfumes all his life. He had a job! It seemed to him that everyone must know. He wanted people to ask him what he had been doing, it made him feel proud and important, although when Mr. Baird, the minister, who had been in the store earlier in the day, greeted him with: "Well, is the day's work over, young man?" he was suddenly too bashful to do more than grunt an answer. He walked soberly down the main street, and broke into a run as he cut across the corner.

His feet burned. It was hard to stand all day like that, although he had told Lois he didn't mind it. He grew hot all over when he thought of the mistakes he had made. But the ache that had seemed lodged in his chest somewhere, ever since the day when his father was buried and all the relatives had told him: "Well, you'll have to look after your mamma now, Gerald, won't you?" — when his mother cried and clung to him that night — that ache was strangely eased. He was earning money. He could take care of his mother. It humiliated him that his mother should have to be doing the washing for other people, although it was only some of their neighbors; but she wouldn't have to do it always. He had not heard more than a few words of what those men in the drugstore were saying. But at the thought — the very suspicion of it — his mind felt hot and sore. If they'd been saying anything about his mother, they'd be sorry for it. He'd — he didn't know just what — but anyway, they'd better look out!

The new little semi-bungalow house looked bleak and desolate. It had been that way ever since his father died.

No new flowers had been planted this spring, the clothes-line hadn't been fixed, the garage for the car they had been going to get this summer stood unpainted just as his father had left it last fall. But they would have things again. The relatives needn't say anything ; he guessed he could take care of his own mother without their telling him. He loved her, but it was none of their business to know it.

She was standing in the doorway. Gerald evaded her kiss, ducked away from her and went tramping out to the kitchen. He was afraid she was going to make a fuss.

“ I gotta wash my hands,” he told her importantly.

She followed him and stood looking at him, pitiful and proud.

“ Why don't you go up to the bathroom, sweetheart ? ”

“ I druther wash down here.”

It was what his father had done when he came home from work.

“ Are you ready for supper ? ” she pleaded.

“ You bet.”

She touched his face, he couldn't avoid that. But he got into the dining room as fast as he could and sat down with satisfaction. There were all the things that he liked — hot biscuits, and jelly, and strawberries. He demanded coffee, and his mother gave it to him. Betty's little mouth puckered up and her eyes were round with amazement.

“ You don't let *us* have coffee,” she said.

“ Well, brother's been working. He has to have it.”

The two little girls chattered eagerly about the school picnic. Gerald stuck to the business of eating. He had never been so hungry ; hot biscuits had never tasted so good. He replied briefly to his mother's fond questions about what he had been doing all day.

“ Were Floyd and his wife good to you ? Did they show you what to do ? ”

“ Yeah, they were all right.”

“ Did you know how to wait on people? ”

“ Sure.”

“ Didn’t it seem terribly long to you? ”

“ Naw.”

“ Well, you want to eat a good supper.”

It was over now, and he didn’t want to talk about it. He wished she’d let him alone.

The one cooky left on the plate was given to Gerald. Betty followed her mother into the kitchen, weeping and complaining. She was the baby, and the extra pieces of everything were for her.

“ I don’t see why you gave it to Gerald, mamma. You didn’t even make him give me half.”

“ Well, darling, listen — when men have been working they get hungrier than women and little girls do, and then we have to let them have what they want to eat. We don’t get so hungry.”

“ *I was hungry!* ”

“ Were you, pet? ” Her mother laughed, half commiseratingly. “ Then you eat this strawberry mamma puts into your little mouth.”

“ I don’t want a strawberry. I had enough strawberries. And I was working,” Betty insisted. “ I put on all the knives and forks. *I was working, mamma.* ”

“ Were you? Well, you were helping. You’re a nice little helper.”

“ Before I’d make a fuss about an old cooky! ” Juanita said scornfully.

She flashed a quick indignant glance at Gerald, remembering how he had talked to her in the drugstore. Let him have everything in the house to eat if he wanted it, and if mamma wanted to give it to him. But there was an obscure justice that silenced her even while it made her resentful. Well, she wouldn’t be here all her life. She’d get married some day — and then she’d do as she pleased.

Gerald went out and sat on the steps of the porch. This was the time of day when his father always used to come out here and look at the paper. Gerald was ashamed of having eaten the cooky. He thought it belonged to him, but let that baby Betty have it! He would after this. He didn't know when he had had such a good supper. He watched Bobby Parker's yard across the street so that he could shout across at Bobby the instant he came outdoors. Maybe they could go over and see those turtles Bobby's uncle had in his back yard. It would be fun to see if they could really be taught tricks. He could hear the girls complaining about the dishes. "It's your turn tonight." "It isn't!" Gee whiz, if they couldn't even do a little thing like washing dishes!

v

The evening came on cool and bright. Gerald stayed on the porch steps, although Bobby didn't appear in the yard. What he had really meant to do was to ask Bobby about the picnic, and try to find out, without saying it in so many words, whether any other boy had hung around Arlene Fedderson. He didn't care, anyway. He had thought about it in the store all the time, but it didn't matter so much now. His mother was the one he had to look after. Again he felt a fine, tired glow of satisfaction. He had put in a good day's work, all right.

Then he blushed. He remembered those men at the drug-store. Here was that old Art Fox coming up the walk with a pailful of strawberries! Well, if he thought he was coming here with those berries, he could just go away again.

"H'lo, Gerald," Art Fox called out cheerfully. He was a good-natured man, a widower, with a red sunburned face and grayish hair and mustache. He lived about a block away from the Rayburns, in a good-sized house. Gerald had always thought he was a nice man, because he never said

any more than " 'Lo, boys! " when the boys ran across his lawn playing run-sheep-run.

" H'lo," Gerald answered briefly.

" Your ma around anywhere? "

" I don't know."

Art Fox halted. " Oh, well. . . . She ain't gone out anywhere, has she? "

" I guess she has."

What did it matter whether that was true or not? Art Fox had no business coming here. He felt a sense of pain and outrage.

" That's too bad. I thought I'd drop around and see if you folks couldn't use a few strawberries. I got a bunch of 'em ripe — too many for an old fellow to eat by himself," he added with a mild attempt at jocularity. " Didn't know as you folks had any."

" We got some."

" That so? Well, I guess you can use a few more, can't you? "

" No, we got all we want."

" That so? Well, if you got all you need . . ." Art Fox stood there awkwardly for a moment. " Well, I guess I'll have to try to dump these on somebody else."

Gerald was silent.

" Your ma be home pretty soon, will she? "

" No, she ain't here."

" That so? Well . . . good-by, then."

Gerald said nothing. He could feel his heart thumping. He looked away. Art Fox was going down the walk with the strawberries newly washed and freshly red in the bright tin pail. Just as he turned the corner, Mrs. Rayburn came to the door.

" I thought I heard somebody. Have they gone? Was anybody here, Gerald? "

" Art Fox." Gerald did not turn around.

"Oh!" his mother seemed a little flustered. "What did he want? Has he gone away?" she asked.

"He brought some of his strawberries."

"Why, Gerald, why didn't you call me?"

"'Cause I told him we didn't want 'em. We got some of our own."

"Why, *Gerald* — "

"Well, we don't want him around here," Gerald said roughly.

He stared straight ahead at a little bird hopping about on the lawn, fighting down the childish tears that made his throat ache and his eyes burn. That sense of pain and outrage swelled in his heart. He thought of the unfinished garage standing bare and desolate in the back yard — his father's old coat still hanging in the kitchen entry. If his mother couldn't take care of herself, he'd do it for her. He was the man of the house now. Art Fox could stay at home where he belonged. This was *their* home. She was *his* mother. Above that ache of unmanly tears he felt a hard exultance. They wouldn't laugh any more in the drugstore. They wouldn't talk about her.

She looked flushed and disconcerted. She stood in the doorway looking at Gerald. The back of his red head was like his father's. So was the set of his sturdy shoulders. She looked at them with an unwilling respect that turned slowly to resentment. All these last few weeks, a secret girlish pleasure had been growing up in her heart most surprisingly out of the blackness of her grief and loneliness. She knew that she was admired. She had thought it hidden from everyone. At times she had laughed and called herself a fool; and at times her eyes were dreamy and a warmth settled softly about her. Now it was shamed and trampled. . . .

She started to say something to Gerald. But she stopped, as she had always stopped with Frank. She felt her anger

melting helplessly away from her. He was so proud of working for her. He was so proud of his strength. He was only a little boy, after all — her little boy, sitting small and pitiful and unapproachable in the twilight.

She turned, her face suddenly quivering, went back into the hot darkness of the empty house, and sat down there alone.

* * *

RUTH SUCKOW was born in Hawarden, Iowa, in 1892. Since her father was a Congregationalist minister, the family was more or less constantly on the move, and Ruth saw at first hand the life of the people of the Middle West. She attended college for three years at Grinnell, Iowa, spent some time at a dramatic school in Boston, and received degrees of B.A. and M.A. at Denver University, where she also taught literature for one year. She was again awarded a degree of M.A. from Grinnell College in 1931. While in Colorado, where she spent a summer as an apprentice in a beeyard thirty miles from Denver, Miss Suckow became interested in beekeeping as a way of earning a living. For six years afterward she owned and managed an apiary in Earlville, Iowa.

Miss Suckow's early observations were keen and sympathetic, and her faithful memory retained impressions clearly until the urge came in later life to write down what she had seen. Her stories of Iowa are realistic, but never ugly. Her fluent pen recreates scenes of country life with its joys and sorrows, its small jealousies, its large neighborliness, and its sometimes poignant tragedies. Her sketches, short stories, and novels are all honest, eloquent, and sympathetic.

Among Miss Suckow's published works are: *Iowa Interiors* and *Children and Older People*, both collections of short stories, and *The Folks*, which is her most popular novel.

In 1929, she married Ferner Nuhn, also an Iowan, and has lived since then for varying periods in California, New Mexico, Vermont, New York City, and Washington, D. C. Since 1937, her home has been in Cedar Falls, Iowa.

Radio Ham

There are many critics of modern youth. They point to the courage and ingenuity of pioneer young and say that the boys and girls of today cannot match it. Vivien R. Brether-ton believes in young America. In the exciting story, "CQ, CQ, CQ," she tells us how Beezy Eaton became a radio ham and how he played a thrilling part in events at the time of a disastrous flood.

CQ, CQ, CQ

by VIVIEN R. BRETHERTON

Margaret Eaton, with that patience that is a part of the burden borne by all mothers of adolescents, gazed across the living room at the recumbent figure of her son. To all outward appearances, he was in a state of utter collapse. But this, she knew, was merely symbolic of the fact that he was deeply plunged in thought. "Richard," she repeated wearily.

Young Richard—or Beezy, as he preferred to be called—squirmed into a new contortion but did not rise to the surface of actual comprehension. He was, in truth, lost in soaring flights of fancy. There had been a nation-rocking kidnaping. The fleeing kidnapers were being pursued by cars and airplanes. But they were doomed. Their nemesis, Beezy, the radio operator, was directing their capture.

Beezy had just reached the point where, the kidnapers having been put behind iron bars, he was having a medal pinned on him by J. Edgar Hoover, while Miss Felice Adams, looking beautiful and impressed, stood by, when his mother spoke. This time not so patiently.

"Richard Eaton, how many times must I speak to stir a spark of life in you?"

Dimly her words penetrated the haze of Beezy's mind. "Sparks!" he murmured raptly. "Sparks calling. This is Sparks, of the liner Olympic. S O S!"

Beezy sat, now, in the radio room of a ship in distress. A thousand lives lay in his hands, including that of Miss

Felice Adams, who stood near by, crying, "Save me! Oh, Beezy, save me!" Then he was springing into action, sending out the call for help, sticking doggedly to his post.

"Richard Kingsford Eaton!"

Beezy returned to earth with a thud. "Okay, Mom. Q R T!"

His mother groaned. "Stop talking like an alphabet, Richard, and listen to me! About your bedroom —"

Beezy's backbone unwound with astonishing alacrity. "Gosh, Mom, you haven't touched anything, have you? I know it looks kind of crowded, but if I'm going to be a real radio ham I've got to have a place to work in. And if my bedroom's the only place —"

"I've waded this morning through bales of wire and tons of junk, just to make your bed, young man," said Margaret Eaton. "Now, you march upstairs and clean up all that mess."

Beezy, with the finesse of long practice, turned the conversation into channels closer to his heart. "Mom, do you suppose I've passed my F. C. C. tests? It's been a month since I took them, and no word yet. Don't you think I should be hearing soon?"

"I don't know, Richard. But I do know I can't go on living in such confusion, so you go this minute and —"

A welcome step on the porch outside brought from Beezy the reaction of a coiled spring. "Mom, there's the postman! Maybe he's got my F. C. C. license. If he has, I can finish my set and start transmitting."

He disappeared. But once outside, investigation of the mailbox plunged him into gloom. There was nothing there. However, he didn't think he'd go back into the house right now. It might be better if his mother cooled down first.

As he started down the street and passed the house next door, a gentle voice called, "Hi, Beezy, has it come yet?"

Beezy cast a glance at the small, dark-haired girl peering

hopefully across the hedge. "Hi," he said dejectedly. "No — not yet."

Young Bets looked at him with wide, trusting eyes. "It will; I just know it will. And, see, I've some old tubes for you."

Beezy's footsteps lagged. He wasn't in any mood to talk with Bets. Anyway, she was just a kid; well, almost a year younger than he was. But she did come in handy.

He reached for the tubes. "I might do something with these, at that. Thanks a lot. Say, if you've some wire, too — "

Bets' round face glowed with pleasure. Just to be helping Beezy sent her to seventh heaven. "Maybe I could get some. And I could come over and help you fix it, Beezy. I'm not doing anything."

Beezy put the tubes into his pocket. "Right now I've got some business down the street. Maybe later." And off he went.

Bets watched him go. He didn't fool her a bit. His business would be at that Felice Adams's house. It made Bets sick.

"Don't think I don't know that you're crazy about her!" she said, to Beezy's retreating back. "Only it won't do you any good. All she thinks about is whether a boy is a football captain or has a rich father. I don't care if she is the glamour type, she's stuck-up and selfish."

She went dejectedly back into her own house, thinking, if only Mother would let me use lipstick, or paint my nails red!

She would have felt even worse if she could have seen Beezy at that moment, gazing in adoration at Felice. For Felice wore lipstick in the best Hollywood manner and displayed fingernails that were like danger signals. But while she accepted Beezy's devotion as her due, she wasn't giving him the date he wanted.

"Tonight? Oh, I couldn't, Beezy. Bob Peake is taking me dancing tonight. He won the tennis finals at Lakeview."

Beezy tried to look unimpressed "Tennis doesn't interest me since I got into radio. Most any day now, I'll be talking to Mexico or Alaska. But look, how about tomorrow night?"

Felice really didn't know. "Jerry Hull—he played quarterback on the team last year, you know—said he might be over. I could hardly promise, Beezy. Of course, if you want to call me"

Beezy could see that merely saying he was going to do things had no effect on Felice. Maybe she'd be impressed when he told her he was the first fellow in their crowd to get an F. C. C. license. But he realized he'd have to get it first.

Beezy's progress, through the rest of the afternoon, took on the appearance of a foraging party. At various downtown "gyp joints," he collected bargains in the way of old dials, used tubes, and a couple of condensers. Thus loaded, he returned to the parental roof.

As he let himself in by the kitchen door, he heard voices in the front room. His mother was speaking.

"I tell you, John, it's more than Job could endure. Shavings all over the floor; wires strung all over the house—"

Beezy could hear his father's chuckle. "Don't let it get you down, darling. After all, it's better to have the kid wrapped up in his radio than out on the streets getting into mischief."

One champion was enough, thought Beezy. He barged into the living room. "Hi, folks. How's the world treating you?"

His mother eyed him. "It's treating me, it seems, to a junkman for a son. What on earth have you got there?"

Beezy bent a proud glance on his possessions. "Say, it's swell stuff. I got the whole lot for four-fifty! So if you

don't mind, Dad, you might slip me a fiver. I'll need more condensers and a soldering iron."

John Eaton lifted expressive eyebrows. "For the love of Pete, son, I gave you five last week and eight the week before!"

"But I've just got to have it, Dad. I'm just getting started."

"Then you'd better start a little slower. Sorry, son, but the Eaton bank is closed."

The look of desperation on her child's face was too much for Margaret Eaton. "After all, John," she pointed out, "isn't it better to have him upstairs with his radio than out on the streets getting into mischief?"

Her husband groaned. "Now, see here, Margaret —"

"Of course, if you're going to let it get you down!"

He surrendered, but with reservations. "Okay, son. I walked right into it that time, so here's a couple of dollars. But that's all, positively, until next month."

Beezy took the two dollars and turned bleakly away. When his Dad said "positively," in that tone of voice, there was no use arguing. But gosh, he'd have to have more money than that! There was nothing for it, he supposed, but to go out and get a job.

It was at that moment that he saw it — a long, official-looking envelope on the table.

Beezy tore it open.

For a moment he couldn't speak. Then his whoop of joy filled the house.

"Mom! Dad! I passed! I'm a ham, now! And get this: my call number is W7PDG. *P* as in Pennsylvania, *D* as in Delaware, *G* as in Georgia. Do you get it? P D G. Pretty Darn Good! Boy, wait until Felice sees this!" He went racing out.

Margaret Eaton turned bewildered eyes to her husband. "Felice? Dear me, is there a girl mixed up in this?"

Her husband grinned. "There usually is," he said.

Margaret Eaton sighed. "Somehow I feel that trouble lies ahead of me."

She was convinced of this as the next four days passed. For Beezy, so lately raised to the heights, was plunged into the depths again. He simply could not find a job. Not as a plumber's assistant; not as a filling-station grease monkey; not even as an office boy.

He didn't, of course, accept defeat quickly. He went on hunting until his feet ached from pounding pavements. And when all else failed, he turned frantically to the Eaton basement, dug out papers, and sold them. He next cleaned out the basement of near-by neighbors and disposed of the results. He mowed lawns and washed cars and even spent one ghastly afternoon minding twins. When, as a final resort, he sacrificed his cherished stamp collection, he knew he'd reached his limit.

He went despairingly to his mother. "Don't you see, I've got to finish my transmitting set so I can get on the air? Here I am, with my license and everything, and I've *told* people I'll probably be talking to Alaska soon. But I've got to have more money, first."

Margaret Eaton felt battered by her son's agony. "Richard, it isn't that your father won't give it to you, but he can't afford to. If you could just manage —"

"That's what I'm telling you, Mom. I can't manage without some money first. And I can't get a job. They won't even let me wash dishes in a restaurant unless I join a union."

"Wash dishes!?" For a moment hysteria tugged at her. She could see her child juggling cups and saucers. Then the pleading look in his eyes weakened her. "Richard," she said, "I'm letting Martha go this week. If you want to help around the house, I won't engage another girl; I'll pay you instead. And you can have that upstairs maid's room for your radio."

A room of his own — a "shack," up under the high gables! For a moment elation flooded Beezy. Then, as the full impact of his mother's words struck him, "But gosh, Mom, let all the kids know I'm doing housework?"

"You'd wash dishes for a restaurant, so why not for me? Of course, if you don't want to earn the money . . ."

It was sheer torture, but Beezy bowed to the inevitable. "Only, for Pete's sake, don't tell anyone! If I got caught, I'd just about pass out. And Mom, can I have my first week's pay in advance?"

She had not the steel within her to refuse him. "But just this once, Richard. You'll have to earn the rest. A bargain is a bargain, and heaven help my china!"

The days that followed were hectic days for Beezy. To see him enveloped in a huge apron, wielding a dustcloth, was to see him in his darkest hours. But he got through them doggedly, for at the end of them his shack, the shrine of his endeavors, was waiting for him. And if he had moments when the bargain with his mother seemed unbearable, they were outweighed by his continued dire need for funds. For he made mistakes, tore down and built again his transmitting set.

His pal and crony, Tinker, came to help him. So did other gangling youths called Butch and Slats and Digger. Margaret Eaton encountered them everywhere.

She watched, while Bets stood wistfully around waiting for Beezy to notice her. She listened as a fervent Beezy, clutching the phone, told Felice that "most any day now I'll be talking to stations all up and down the coast."

The days grew hotter. Beezy, perspiration dripping from him, could hardly be pried loose from his shack for meals or sleep. Tinker left on a camping trip. Butch and Slats went North. Only Bets, faithful to the last, stood waiting to be useful. Under the circumstances, Beezy generously accepted help from her.

"And can I Q C when we get it done?" she asked eagerly. "You don't say Q C," said Beezy patronizingly. "You say C Q. That means whoever is listening tune in and chew the rag. Say, hand me that screw driver over there." And Bets, beaming happily, scrambled to obey.

Beezy's spirits, too, were high again. For one thing, Felice was getting curious about his shack, and that, to Beezy's way of thinking, was a hopeful sign. And for another, his shack was taking on a new and exciting atmosphere. The walls were covered with maps, colored call cards hung everywhere, and even the sawdust on the floor, the scraps of wire and metal that lay about added, so he thought, to the creative air. Of course, there still clung to him the nightmare fear of being caught at his housework. Just to imagine Felice finding out that he made beds sent cold chills down his back. But that weekly wage gave him strength to endure his servitude.

To spur him on in his endeavors, he kept his homemade receiving set blaring raucously, but it was dulcet music to his ears. Yes, life was not so bad, after all!

There came at last the breath-taking day when, to his "CQ—CQ—Station W7PDG standing by for a call," the first message came back through the loud-speaker. His "Mom, I've got it!" filled the house. At last, he was an active ham!

True, his call came from another boy a mile or so across town, but to Beezy it was the voice of mystery and adventure, of far horizons crossed. His set, the creation of his own hands, was working!

His spirits rose to a new high with his achievement. All else that filled his familiar world, even Felice, fled from his mind. He was completely absorbed in the thrill that comes from man's effort to contact the wide, reaching world.

Exuberance marked his waking hours. Strange and weird, to his mother's ears, were the conversations that took place

in his shack. It seemed to her that he spoke a foreign tongue. A visit to a distant ham was "rag chewing." "CUL" was "see you later." "73" was "best regards." And Felice, being Beezy's heart-throb, was his "YL."

As Beezy's proficiency grew, so did his circle of new-found ham friends. But closest of his new cronies was Chris.

Chris, like himself, was a newcomer to ham radio. He lived in a city in the northern part of the state. His father was city editor on the biggest paper there. Chris and Beezy checked regularly on each other, discussing everything from their "YL's" to their common yen for Myrna Loy. It was from these conversations that Beezy hit upon his big idea.

He was, he felt, ready to impress Felice now. What better way than by bringing her to his house, and maybe after dinner springing Chris on her?

Aglow with confidence, he approached his mother. "Look, Mom, will it be all right if I ask a girl to dinner?"

"Why, I guess so, Richard. You mean Bets, I suppose."

Beezy's expression was one of pain. "Gosh, Mom, Bets is just a kid. I mean Felice Adams. She—Mom, she's swell!"

"Of course, Richard, if it's Felice you want. Do you mean tomorrow night?"

Beezy gave the matter thought, but voted against it. "It's too soon," he decided. "We'd have to plan a lot about it first. You can't just dive in and ask a girl like Felice to dinner without planning for it. Couldn't you make it swanky, Mom? You know, a swell feed—and all your best things out. Felice is probably used to nothing but the best. And we've got to do something to the house."

Margaret Eaton began to wonder what she was letting herself in for. "You weren't thinking of having it remodeled or of calling in an interior decorator?"

Her innuendoes were lost on Beezy. "Gosh, no. But we

got to get it all slicked up. Maybe we ought to have the floors waxed, and then—oh, you know, flowers and that sort of stuff. I'd have to get my good suit pressed, too. And a new tie, maybe. Mom, don't you understand? This is pretty important to me."

His mother could see that it was, and she felt a sudden tightness in her throat. For Felice, all must be perfect. If it killed her, she thought, she'd go through with it.

"Then ask her for Friday night, Richard, and we'll try to have everything just as you want it," she said.

The next three days were days of mingled bliss and sacrifice for Beezy. Felice's acceptance lifted him to the pinnacle of expectation, but the work it entailed nearly floored him. He scrubbed and cleaned until his muscles ached. He lived in perpetual agony lest someone catch him at his labors, and twice—when the unexpected happened—only heroic action saved him. Once it was Tinker, coming to report on his recent trip, and Beezy, wrapped up in an apron, spent a ghastly thirty minutes crouched behind the davenport. The second time Bets nearly caught him mopping up the kitchen.

But at last the moment came when, bathed and polished to a shining excellence, he surveyed the result of all his efforts, and he was content. The house shone; the menu had his full approval. And the table—well, his mother had done herself proud with that! To be sure, she herself looked a little wilted, but Beezy felt certain she could remedy that.

"You're okay, Snooks," he remarked affectionately. "Now, if you can go get your hair fixed up—one of those permanents or something."

A permanent! At five in the afternoon, with the past three days behind her! Margaret Eaton felt her maternal halo slipping precariously. Then the glow of her son's face recalled her to her vow.

"All right, darling. I'll manage to be a credit to you." And she watched him clatter off to get his inamorata.

It was, incredibly, an hour before he returned. An hour in which Beezy's mother, with a frantic eye upon her dinner, delivered herself of a lecture anent the tardiness of the young. But one glance at her stripling, when he dragged himself in, silenced her.

Beezy was a balloon from which the air had escaped. "She isn't coming, Mom."

What could a mother say in the face of such stark agony?

In silence Beezy turned away. That table, with all the best glassware and the centerpiece especially ordered from the florist, and the floors he'd polished, the windows he'd washed! It was suddenly more than he could bear.

He burst out, in hot revolt, "She—went out on another date with that Bob Peake. She just went and left word she was sorry but she'd forgotten she had a date with him. But that's a lie, Mom. He only got back to town yesterday and I asked her four days ago. She just thought he was more important than I am."

Margaret Eaton could have wrung Felice's neck, but instinct warned her against too much sympathy.

“Never mind,” she said. “Your father's here, and we can have a grand dinner, anyway. Later, you can go to a movie.”

A movie, when Beezy had had such marvelous plans for the evening! The hard lump in his throat grew bigger. “I—I'm not very hungry, Mom. I—don't believe I want anything to eat. I guess I'll just—take a walk or something.”

His mother watched him go, his young shoulders drooping. Then, weakly, remembering all her preparations, she sank into a chair.

Outside, Beezy looked up at the sky. “It's goin' to rain,” he muttered. He turned and went inside and up to his room.

He lay in bed that night and listened to the storm. At daybreak rain was coming down in bucketfuls; as the downpour increased, his mood kept pace with it. He was as dreary as the day. It was not, in fact, until the following afternoon that he showed signs of returning life. Then, suddenly, he was alert again.

“Say, Mom.” He came racing down the stairs from his shack. “Did you know the river is rising like the dickens? That low district below the bridge is a mess. A kid that lives down there told me over his ham station. Their telephones are out, so he gave me a message to phone down to his dad’s office. Boy, I guess that’s putting old W7PDG to a practical use!”

The rest of that afternoon he was a one-man storm reporter for his mother. Two small bridges on creeks emptying into the river went out. The rainfall was so heavy that gutters in downtown streets were clogged. And back in the mountains — so word came from distant hams — the storm was a regular cloudburst.

Beezy contacted Chris late in the day, and from the briskness of his tone it seemed that he was no longer submerged by his recent disillusionment. “Gosh, Chris, we’re sure getting our feet wet down here. They’ve got two schoolhouses full of people washed out of their homes, and boy, it looks as if the excitement was just beginning.”

He was right in that. When his father came home later, he looked worried. “Oh, it’ll be all right, Margaret, though they do say it’s the worst rainfall in forty years.”

Margaret Eaton raised her voice above the uproar of her son’s upstairs loud-speaker. “I can stand anything, even that” — indicating the blaring sound — “if it takes Richard’s mind off the blow dealt him by his precious Felice!” Then, as she saw her husband’s face, “John, you don’t mean there’s any real danger?”

“Probably not. The river’s rising fast, but the levees

will hold it, for the most part. However, it can't touch us. We're on high land."

Beezy, clattering through the doorway on the heels of his father's words, dashed back upstairs to contact Chris again. A minute later, just before signing off, Chris's voice came back to him.

"Look, Beezy, my dad says things may happen down there. He says already half the wires in your county are down, and slides and washouts are making more trouble fast. He says the wires left are overcrowded, so you keep on sending me the news and I'll stay tuned in on you. Boy, maybe you and I can get some news stories, and my dad will use them!"

Beezy, not realizing that a real emergency was descending upon him, was dizzy with excitement. Throughout that day and evening he picked up outside messages and relayed them north. He kept a feverish contact with three other ham stations in different sections of the town, and hourly it grew more evident that the floodwaters were reaching disaster heights.

With early morning, the news grew more dramatic. The river, going on a rampage, tore out railway and highway bridges, paralyzing transportation and communication. Roads were being washed out or made impassable by slides. The raging torrents struck swift, furious blows that annihilated wire communications, until in many outlying districts radio was the sole link with the outside world. Calls for supplies, for equipment for the police, instructions for rerouting highway traffic, and missing-persons reports began to fill the air. And when the big dam power plant was taken out by the slides, the loss of power brought the disaster to major proportions in great sections of the valley.

Beezy could sit at his transmitting set in his room high up under the roof, and look out over half the town. And now panic, as well as excitement, filled him. Everywhere

he looked, he could see rising water, surging angrily to ever-increasing depths, changing his safe, familiar world into something sinister.

The town was isolated, now — ringed around with flooded areas. One by one, the ham stations in the lower areas were being put out of commission by accidents or rising water, until only a few were relaying their news to Beezy. He was furiously sending it out, with Chris as his objective. For Chris was in a fever, too. His dad, he said, was there beside him with a stenographer. And all the news Beezy sent was going straight to the newspaper.

It was at three o'clock in the afternoon that Beezy, looking out his window toward the mile-high mountains in the distance, saw a sight that seemed incredible. Yet there it was — a forty-foot wall of water roaring down upon the city that lay in its path!

Beezy's shriek of "Mom! Dad!" filled the house. Then he frantically sent out his warning to those lower stations. "Everybody, look out — a regular tidal wave's coming! Tell everybody — tell 'em quick — to get somewhere to safety!"

The water came, bringing destruction with it, leaving havoc behind. Havoc that went on and on. Beezy, at his table, felt a cold chill break out over him. The streets were tumbling, racing rivers — four, five, even ten feet deep. In the distance he could see a house tumbling over in a crazy manner. Chairs, tables, bedding, pillows — unbelievable, the things that came floating down what had been a quiet street. There was a kitten, clinging frantically to a bit of fence. A calf, already drowned, bobbing along. A dog . . .

Beezy raised a white face and saw his mother standing beside him.

She said, "I wish your father would come home. He went downtown to see if there was anything he could do to help." She was terrified but trying to hide it.

Now the water was across the lawn, was lapping up against the front-porch steps. Leaving his post, Beezy dashed downstairs, followed by his mother. They moved what things they could to the upstairs rooms. When no more could be done, Beezy raced back to his radio.

Across the street a car left standing by the curb was washed in slowly against a house. From every house, frightened faces peered from upstairs windows.

"D-Dad's car?" stammered Beezy.

His mother turned from the window. "It's in the garage. The water hasn't reached there, yet. Richard, you must come downstairs and rest, eat something. You look exhausted."

"Mom, I'm pledged to stay here. My license says 'to serve the public interest, convenience, and necessity,' and this is a necessity. I got to stick here, so the other stations that can't send distance calls can relay to me."

He went on picking up messages, each one more terrifying than the last. A big apartment house had crumbled, and nobody knew how many people had been hurt. People were being drowned. And many were lost and missing. Help was needed — every kind of help. Supplies, doctors, emergency equipment, everything!

And then suddenly the lights in the house, the power in Beezy's amateur set, were all gone at once. He heard his mother saying, "There goes the electric plant, Richard, and your father's down there. We can't reach him; we can't reach anybody. We can't even call for help."

Beezy worked frantically over his set. But no, of course it was dead! Yet he had to keep on sending; Chris was counting on him. Chris — and how many others, now? How would people know what was happening if he, Beezy, couldn't tell them?

He left his mother, went dashing down the stairs. His

father's car was still in the garage. If he could get the battery . . .

The water had come across the porch. Beezy forced the door open. Then he was outside. He plunged off the porch into water almost to his waist. He braced himself against the sucking current. If he could only get across the eighty feet or so to the corner where the garage stood, he could still retrieve that battery.

The water was cold. It chilled his blood, surged around him. He went slowly, clutching bushes and small trees. He gained the garage at last, stood up in water only to his knees, hurled himself at the floor boards of the car.

He was frightened and he was tired, but he finally got the battery out. Now to cross to the house again. If only the water didn't drag at him so, and the battery wasn't such a load to carry! If he lost his footing, the water would knock him down and keep him under. It was strong enough. And it was getting deeper every minute. Panting, he plunged into it.

It was then he saw Bets fighting her way across to him. In her hands she had a roll of insulated wire which she had been saving for Beezy. She had anchored one end of it to Beezy's back porch, and she was letting the rest out, foot by foot, as the water swirled around her.

A surge of relief flooded Beezy. He didn't question what had brought her there, or how wild and crazy she had been to come. He needed help.

"Look out you don't slip!" he called to her. "Gosh, I'm glad you came. I got to get this — back to the house."

Bets reached his side; they braced themselves against a near-by tree, while Bets wound the free end of the wire around the trunk. Now they had a safety line to cling to while they fought their way back to the house.

"Boy, that — fixes it!" panted Beezy. "Now, if you can — just hang on to me — while I hang on to this battery."

They made their way back, inch by inch, with Bets's shoulder close to Beezy's. "I—saw you—from the window," she said. "I thought—I'd better come help."

They reached the house at last. Beezy's mother held the door open for them.

Dripping and breathing heavily, he carried the battery upstairs to his "shack" and hastily connected it to supply the power to the tube filaments. Feverishly, then, he tried to operate the set. To his consternation, his antennae ammeter showed no output. Beezy had overlooked the failure of the high voltage of the plate current supply necessary for his "bottles."

He felt a wave of nausea sweep over him. All that struggle—and for nothing! He turned agonized eyes to Bets. "It—it won't work!" he gulped.

Bets was all sympathy and concern. "Beezy, if you only had the car engine."

A thought struck Beezy: the power pack from his father's car radio! Boy!

Before his mother could protest, he was running down the stairs again, a wrench and a screw driver in his hand.

The water was very little higher, and this time there was the guideline. It wouldn't be so difficult, with that help. The power pack would be light, too. He could carry it in one hand. And it would produce plate current from a storage-battery source, even though he might reach less than his normal range.

He made the trip successfully, brought back the power pack, and this time he got the set to working. Feverishly he sat down to broadcast the flood, as it was presented to his observation.

Before the water subsided—before the high peak of danger passed—Beezy, from his upstairs room, saw sights that left him strangely quiet. A woman, trapped in a car she was attempting to force through the flood, leaving it

in desperation, only to be drowned before his very eyes. In the distance, a man and two small children hurled from a car top, where they had climbed for safety. All this and more he saw. And he broadcast it all in an unsteady voice, utilizing the battery and power pack that kept his set working. At last, worn out, he could only mumble, "Somebody — better send help — better send it soon. The water's goin' down, now — but we'll need — all the help we can get."

When he crumpled up from sheer exhaustion, there was Bets to take his place.

It was strange, when it was all over.— when once more the muddy streets emerged from the water and the rescue and clean-up work was starting — to look back on it and realize it had actually happened. Not even when his father, returning home at last, said, "Son, you did a good job. From what I hear, there was a long time when you sent out the only word that got out of this town," could Beezy really believe that it had happened. It was only when he remembered the woman he had seen drown . . .

It was strange, too, to read the newspapers, when at last they began coming into town again. To see stories of himself and Bets and Chris spread all over the front pages. Why, even his words — those boyish, broken, frantic words — were down there in print. And pictures of Chris getting messages from him. And even pictures of himself and Bets — snapshots he had sent Chris when they'd first begun talking to each other.

But it didn't make him feel strange or even elated when Felice came to see him. It just made him mad, the way she talked.

"Why, you were simply wonderful, Beezy! Just think, you're practically famous now. And wasn't it too thrilling?"

Beezy looked at her. Something had happened to him,

he supposed. Maybe seeing people drown did that to you. But it was as if he really saw Felice for the first time. "No," he said bluntly, "it wasn't. It — but you wouldn't understand."

Felice tossed her head. "I guess I can understand a lot of things, Beezy. And one of them is the way that silly little Bets angled herself into the newspapers with your story. I suppose she thinks everybody will believe she's your girl now. But I didn't come to discuss Bets. I came to tell you how crazy I am to see your radio room and to hear about everything."

It was curious, the way Beezy felt like bristling. But he wasn't going to have Felice talking that way about Bets! "I'm busy," he said flatly, "and I'm going to go on being busy. But Bets isn't silly, see? She didn't angle herself into any story, either. If she hadn't helped me, there wouldn't have been any story. I think she's swell. As for any other girls, they're just a lot of static, as far as I'm concerned."

Yep, he concluded, as he watched Miss Felice Adams tilt up her nose and walk huffily away, he guessed that settled her. And about time, too. Felice had been a kid crush. But he was grown-up, now.

He stood pondering on deep thoughts, then went to hunt up Bets. Of course, it was a lot of hooey about her being his girl. But just the same . . .

"Look," he said when he found her, "if you want to come over to my shack this evening, I'll introduce you to Chris. Formally, that is. He — well, I guess he thinks you're my YL now, and we can't let him down at this stage of the game."



VIVIEN BRETHERTON has contributed her own note of biography. If Beezy Eaton seemed to you a very real boy, you will understand why when you read this brief sketch from her.

For one who didn't start out with a burning ambition to be a writer, but who wrote her first story as a bet, I sometimes wonder why I went right on with it. Probably I was so surprised at my own good luck that I wanted to test its lasting qualities. Or perhaps there is a fascination in taking ideas and developing them into plots and finally translating them to the printed page, that grows stronger the more it is put to use. But just as I stumbled accidentally into the writing of my first story, some fifteen years ago, so I wandered haphazard into the creation of Beezy Eaton. Or perhaps I should say I was driven to it. Having a "Beezy" in the family—a nephew who made his home with us—exposed me rather violently to his adventures. He took the whole household through all the phases of jalopies, girls, teen-age problems and tribulations, so it seemed quite natural, finally, for me to put some of them down on paper. The Beezy Eaton series was the result.

Frost in Oklahoma

Education comes too easily to many boys and girls in this country, especially in the larger towns and cities. The wonderful advantages of books, laboratories, and gymnasiums are only half appreciated because they are so accessible. There are many rural sections, however, where a poor young student has to fight to get beyond the grade school. Even today there are young Lincolns dreaming of a chance to get an education; and there are mothers, saving, scrimping, plotting to get together meager sums for clothes and books, and working in the fields themselves to allow their children time for study.

Can you imagine working long, dreary hours at a cotton gin and "aching" to get at your Latin grammar? Joie did. Can you imagine an all-night fight against cruel frost—a fight waged with blackened hands, swollen eyes, and frozen feet, to save a whole summer's labor? Joie and his mother fought that battle. The things you work and slave and fight for mean a lot to you. Joie wanted an education.

IT IS MORNING

by JENNIE HARRIS OLIVER

. . . When Mrs. Nash lugged a coarse bag of dahlia roots to the unused patch of red earth behind the barnyard, she wanted only to get away from the house with its familiarity, away from the sin that was giving her sleepless nights and tortured days. For Rachel Nash — who, until her daughter's marriage, had been open as the day — was a liar. She had bought Cynthia Ann's pretty wedding clothes and threatened innocence with lies.

It pointed back to Aunt Ad's hundred-dollar check. Some hold it no lie, Rachel's using the yearly payment from her own inheritance. Even if it was — as year by year — promised for debt, wasn't it her money? But what of stealing it out of the mail and saying it hadn't come? What of letting Cynthia's father send letters and "tracers" after it? But for Joie, her dreamer, Rachel would have confessed and taken the consequences. Joie had enough hindrance without his father and mother quarreling — maybe separating.

The patch behind the barn had never been plowed; but Rachel knew how to spade. Foolish loss of time and strength, Ira Nash would have said. If she must dig, why not help Joie chop cotton? Oh, well! With the sack bulging awkwardly at her feet, Rachel Nash stood and read the pamphlet tucked in with the hundred choice — she did not dream *how* choice — roots. Reading, she smiled, knowing exactly why her girl had passed on these tubers. There was

an experiment station at the A. & M. College where Cynthia's young husband taught English, and these had been a present from the greenhouse.

Rachel thought shrewdly that the gardener might be proving some new phase in dahlias. But no bride wishes to raise flowers, that comes toward middle life; toward losses, silence; in the case of Rachel Nash, after a bridge of lies.

Cynthia's mother read the booklet through—not many pages. It was only Bulletin No. 1370, sent out by the U. S. Department of Agriculture. But it was interesting as a fairy tale. In spite of herself Mother was thrilled.

When she had stripped off her faded blue sweater and begun turning packed red earth, she looked often at the lowering sun. With Joie in the field and his father at the gin cleaning out the seed house, she would have tremendous appetites to satisfy. Supper must be on the dot. Rachel's dark, silver-touched hair came loose and clung in curls to her damp neck and face. Some work, setting out dahlias! But it *was* diverting.

Back in the kitchen, slicing bacon, making biscuits, Rachel Nash felt better. Where had been a stone in her left side was a pulsation—not as it had been, but more like it. Supper was all but done when Ira stepped in. Big Ira Nash was almost blond, almost good-looking.

"Gosh, I'm tired!" he puffed, and kissed his wife's smiling mouth. "How's my girl? I missed the mail carrier. Nothing from Ad?"

"Nothing."

Rachel opened the oven door, flinched, and closed it again. She stood looking at her husband's broad back stooped at the wash bench. Nash was scouring his hands and face noisily, flinging water on the faded linoleum. Where the suds fell sprang up gay little roses on a gray ground. The man was mad clear through. Should she tell him the check had bought a "shade of green silk" for Cynthia to be married in?

At that moment of greatest temptation she saw Joie hopping across the barnyard and clipping toward the house as if he hadn't chopped cotton all day. In September he hoped to go to Stillwater where Cynthia was and attend Junior High. Let him have his dream — *she'd wait*.

When the boy breezed in, it seemed the very walls reached out for him. Alive, Joie was! He peered at the oven, squinched up his nose, and made motions of feeding his face. When his father, wiping his wrists thoroughly before yielding up the basin, asked loudly where he'd been, he jumped and bugged his big blue eyes absurdly. He didn't answer at once, either. In fact, he was buttering a hot biscuit when he burst his joyous bomb.

"I was talking with Margaret Foss. She drove her truck up to the south fence to look at Selim. You couldn't see us from the lane. *Dad* — Joie leaned and upset his glass of water. When his father ordered him to "set up," he made himself a ramrod — any way to please! "Say, Dad. Selim's mine, ain't — *isn't* he? He's my horse?"

Nash narrowed his eyes. "Yes, of course. Why?"

"Margaret'll give me seventy-five dollars for him this fall. She's learning to ride. I —" Joie looked away — "I wouldn't let him go for anything but school money. You said you couldn't afford to let me work out this summer" — Mrs. Nash flinched; she hadn't known that — "but seventy-five will buy my books and clothes — huh?" He added practically, "Maw, pass the 'lasses."

Nash was of a suspicious turn. "How'd Margaret know we'd sell Selim?"

"She didn't. Just saw us shaking hands and stopped to find out."

"I thought you were chopping cotton."

"Aw — Dad! Selim learned at the barn. You said let him crop grass along the fence. It's only a minute to 'shake' after you learn how."

"Leave Selim at the barn." Mr. Nash drank his third cup of coffee at a gulp. "Now get your cap," he said. "I need you at the gin."

Joie grabbed his "sky-piece" and chucked it on bill-side behind. His mother had to smile, watching him follow his father with high-stepping strides. Little monkey! Here he was aching to get through and glue his eye to the Latin grammar Cynthia sent him, and he could cut up like that!

Later, when Mother was writing to Cynthia about the dahlias, she must mention the dark-lantern Joie had fixed so his light couldn't be seen from the stairway. She shouldn't be telling this; Ira *might* step in. He was offended with Cynthia for running off to get married — a letter addressed to "Mrs. Field Houston," was outside his notice; still — one could never tell. It was a quarter of a mile to the postbox, but she took the letter and mailed it right then.

Rachel Nash wrote about the dahlias and forgot them. She had milk to see to, hens to set, and vegetables to lug up from the swale where Nash cultivated them, richly, with his corn. There was patching — always patching to do. She must manage, without stinting the table, to sell eggs and buy Joie a silk shirt for his school outfit. The problem would be to hide the money where Ira couldn't find it.

It was a full month — the last of July — to be exact, Wednesday, at noon, when she thought again of the tubers planted beside their tall stakes in the red earth lot. She had fried chicken and dewberry pie for dinner that day, but Joie didn't eat a bite. He was late getting to the table, and there he sat, breathing hard. He had been running.

"Eat," ordered his father. "What's the matter with you?"

"Been hunting Selim," Joie mumbled, breaking a biscuit and just looking at it. "Selim's gone. Maybe somebody stole him. I—" he swallowed — "I got to go south —"

Nash deliberated over the platter of crispy chicken, chose

a thigh, and set his teeth in it. "Selim's all right, son," he said at last. "I sold him."

"Ira!" gasped his wife.

Joie swallowed painfully. He didn't speak; he couldn't. He had always looked pinched — Mother bade herself consider that. But she had never before seen his big blue eyes go so far back in his head nor his cheekbones look so glazed. As he fumbled with his food, pretending to eat, his father added:

"Old Man Porterfield gave me eighty dollars for him, and we need it, every cent. If Ad's check — no use discussing that. Anyway those things happen. I want you to go to Stillwater, understand that. Maybe you can go next year. But Selim's a thing of the past. Forget him and see if you can keep your mind on that cotton chopping. Get it done before the rain catches us. Why don't you eat your dinner?"

Joie tried to answer, but his lips only gripped each other, twisted sidewise, and drew into a little pucker. Suddenly he got up and reached for his cap. One rough hand, all knuckles, pressed his middle; he couldn't seem to straighten.

"What's the matter with your stomach," his father demanded impatiently. "Been gnawing them green apples?"

And when Joie, just shaking his head, stumbled out and crossed the yard toward the cotton field:

"Any more coffee?" Nash asked uncomfortably. "There, that's plenty. I've had three cups."

Rachel wouldn't pick a quarrel. She did want to remind him what a pitiful little colt Selim had been — how Joie had lugged him in out of the field and hid him to keep him from being shot. She wanted to point how, after keeping Joie out of school, he would later on say wrathfully:

"If you'd gone to Stillwater as I wanted you to, you'd know something."

The things she might have said — no use!

"Better let Margaret know you've sold Selim, hadn't you?" she murmured. "I'd phone her, right away."

"She knows it, I called her from the gin. She offered me eighty, but the deal was made. Now," he added practically, "if Ad's check does blow in, we'll be sitting pretty. I wish you'd make a point to see the carrier this afternoon; maybe he forgot that last 'tracer.' Ad's got to register her mail after this; I'm going to insist on it. Write and tell her that, won't you?"

Rachel Nash held herself still. Her sensitive face neither paled nor flushed. "Maybe I'd better," she said.

When Mother went to the red earth lot again, there wasn't a dahlia in sight, nothing but jimson weeds. But the plants were there. Of course they had to be weeded before ridging up with the hoe. Later on she was going to the field with a lunch for Joie. Joie oughtn't to be chopping on an empty stomach, not in that blazing sun. *She'd make him eat.*

It was going to rain; Rachel smelled it. She saw purple shadows trail through the hollows; saw the house martins wheeling crazily. If there had been no other sign, the way her wavy hair drew out of the pins and curled all over was enough. How smothering hot it was! How her dress stuck to her damp shoulders — there, she had torn it, her second-best house dress!

Mrs. Nash had no love for the dahlias, but she was careful not to uproot or bruise them. When she cut one off, she bit her lip. Too bad! Some plants would have spindled to nothing in all that jungle; not they. The Bulletin told how this old-fashioned flower that had bloomed in even tubelets, expressionless as a row of china dolls, now changed its appearance with marvelous whimsicality. Maybe the one she sliced off had held a cactus bloom, a flaming peony, or a dew-haunted anemone. She was going to tell Joie what possibilities were in the tubers Cynthia sent, but when she finally got

to the field she was too frightened to say a word. Joie couldn't have heard her anyway.

The boy was working in what was called the "south slope." One came on it suddenly out of the jack oaks; one crawled into it under a barbed-wire fence or walked some distance to the lane gate. Mother crawled under. At first she didn't see Joie. He was lying between the short, shining cotton plants not quite as if he had fainted, more as if he had slumped down in sleep. His right hand still curved on the hoe handle; his left hid his face. Mother dropped beside him and lifted his head on her arm. Goodness, what had become of his big eyes?"

"Joie, Joie," she got her breath hoarsely. "Sonny, wake up."

"Huh — huh, Maw?" The boy blinked foolishly and eased himself to his knees. "Gee, Maw, did I scare you?"

"Did you?"

"Must-a been asleep. I studied till most morning. Maw, Latin verbs have more cases —" Joie paused, trembling. Then he "out with it." "No, it wasn't the verbs, it was Selim. You never did see him shake hands; I was saving it for a surprise. Margaret —"

"Yes, Joie?"

"Margaret Foss was going to let me keep him for her till September, then she was going to kind o' keep him for me. It was som'pin like borrowing money. If I got enough to do after school and Saturdays —"

The trailing explanation dwindled; failed utterly. When in dead earnest, Joie dropped his teasing "Maw" and said "Mother." He said that now, "Mother!" and again "Mother, *Mother!*"

So Rachel Nash took him in her arms — her rack-a-bones — and cried with him there on the edge of the unfinished cotton.

Mrs. Nash did not know how she would have managed

without her free evenings. When her husband had drowsed over his farm journal and was in bed, sleeping audibly, she pottered around the house for hours. Usually she read a little with all the rest, or looked through catalogues for pretty clothing she knew she could never have; but tonight she worked rapidly, with introspective narrowing of the eyes.

Storm was holding off. When, finally, she ran around the yard and peered up at Joie's open window, above that and the eaves frail clouds were weaving and raveling lace across the full face of the moon. It would surely rain before long, but she took a chance it would hold off, say, an hour longer.

One never can tell about mothers. Rachel Nash—she who had been Rachel Culpepper—was at heart a gay adventurer. Ira was impatient with anything he thought "nonsense"; she had had her lesson with him. But there was Joie—when she gathered a handful of pebbles and tossed them with fair aim, his pinched face appeared instantly between two trails of budding woodbine.

"Come down," she gestured, "and hurry."

Joie was outside the kitchen door, putting on his shoes, when she reached him. He had been on the bed with his book; where his hair had pressed the pillow, it stood up funny. Mother grabbed his arm and hustled him out the side gate and across the railroad cut.

"I got to thinking about Selim," she whispered. "Want to shake hands with him?"

"Gee—Mother," Joie found her fingers and gripped them, "you're a joe-dandy! How'd you know where they keep him?"

"I telephoned Mrs. Porterfield. It's the west lot, right against the road."

"It's a mile over there."

"Then let's hurry."

The Porterfield road was deep-rutted, wallowing in sand,

but they clipped right along. Mother was ashamed when she stumbled.

"I ought to walk more," she laughed; "must be getting old."

"Old," Joie chuckled, "old? You think an 'old one' would do this?"

"Forty-two, my next birthday."

Joie was silent till something that looked like a straggler, and wasn't, had been passed. "You will get old," he then said, "nothing to keep you from it. If I could go through the university and get a job teaching Latin, you'd have a home where there's gas and running water and folks — *your kind*. Dad could go along. He'd do the spending — he's that stripe."

"Joie, he's your father."

"Can I help that, Maw?"

In his breaking boy-voice, Joie struck up a ragged little thread of melody.

How Joie was keeping his chin up, steering away from the tragedy that had prostrated him in the cotton field! Joie Nash was sixteen and had missed two terms of school. Another year on the farm would cripple his ambition and stunt his body. No use harping on it, though. Mother was proud of her boy's grit. A Culpepper, Joie was. Cynthia — a Nash — would have raved.

The rain was getting nearer. Nothing to worry about yet, but in the archway between the leaning cottonwoods lightning quivered like lamps in a draft; overhead the moon looked from a window of faintly shining colors through lace that fluttered fast, blown by the high-up wind. In sight of Porterfield's, Joie whistled on two fingers, and there was immediate answer — a neigh, a scream, close and coming closer.

The adventurers hurried now; they almost ran. This was the place — yes, they could see the white patch on Selim's right shoulder.

"Think you can get in, Maw?" Joie panted. "Here, I'll put my foot on the bottom wire and hold up the top one. Now scoot."

Mother scooted. Her eyes were misted. When she could see again, there was the Porterfield house black against the night-blue horizon; there was a blur of orchard and of coarse meadow. Right there was Joie leaping on Selim's back; Joie getting down to rap Selim on his right foot, only he called it "hand."

"Shake hands, old sport," Joie croaked. "Good! Now, shake with the lady."

Mother tore her dress getting back into the road — no matter. Lightning was closer now; boomings, before heard faintly, rolled nearer; the wind dropped out of the moon's casement and blew dust in their eyes. Before they were near home, they smelled rain on the red dust behind them.

"Maw," yelled Joie, "can you sure-enough run?"

"Can I?" laughed Rachel. "Watch *me*" — and *led*.

Mother and Joie had wanted to visit Cynthia, and unexpectedly the chance came. While the big rain was on, the company Nash was buying and ginning for sent him over to Stillwater to a Cotton Session. A car and driver were furnished — plenty of room for all. Ira sat with the chauffeur; Mother and Joie, behind.

It was storming, but the automobile was closed. Rushing along in the deep, soft cushions with rain drumming on the roof was like a dream. Of course, Joie was going among boys who had taken to long pants — most of them to "jelly-bean" stuff; but what of that? Mother didn't have a summer hat, and her shoes were a disgrace. Maybe her dark-blue, made-over "one-piece" wasn't so bad, but her hands — rough, cut, burnt — oh, well!

Forty miles is no trip on graded roads. They had scarcely relaxed in luxury until they glimpsed through the wet win-

dows Junior High ; made two turns and reached Hester Avenue — and Cynthia Ann. My, but Cynthia was glad to see them! She and Mother hugged ; she and Joie said, " Aw! " and " Aw, yourself! " Grabbed hands and spun around. Nash started in being stiffish, but that didn't last. There was a gas fireplace in the living room, and there they took off the damp before going over the rest of the house — the four rooms and a bath, with sleeping porch for Joie — that the young Houstons had made themselves poor but proud, buying in the Building and Loan.

Cynthia married! Had she been as pretty as that? Nash didn't like her bobbed hair, but the others did. It looked like yellow petals on a flower. The whole place, for that matter, with its white woodwork and cushions, curtains and floor covering of summer pink and green, was like a rose garden.

When Nash went over to Whitehurst Hall where the cotton school was and took Joie with him, Cynthia got out the letter that came with Aunt Ad's wedding present. Funny, no mention was made of the check she had been at such pains to acknowledge, but Mother said that was " the Ad of it." When Cynthia Ann wondered how her father got on without the check, she just had to wonder. It was to be hoped she would never know any more about it than she did then.

There was the wedding dress! Mother saw just a shimmery slip of pale green with long sleeves, pointed lace collar, and narrow streamer ties of bronze velvet. Coat, hat, slippers, and stockings, all were bronze — so that was the way they did it! At first, Rachel Nash couldn't see a hundred dollars in the outfit, but when her girl put everything on and pranced back and forth — that was different.

They talked about Joie. Cynthia said if she and Field hadn't pledged every cent except what they lived on, they'd be glad to buy books and clothes. But even if the books

could be managed for, it wouldn't be fair for him to start in looking like a little hick. Besides, the suit he had wouldn't last a month out.

The rain stopped, and they went over to the library building where Field's office was. Rachel had known how her son-in-law looked — his dark, young spareness such a contrast to Cynthia's curved pink-and-whiteness — but she hadn't quite remembered how warm and dependable his smile was. She had been going to slip off and find out what she could about dahlias, but it was an hour when Field might leave, and he asked her where she would *like* to go.

Walking along the cement driveways with Field and Cynthia, Mrs. Nash forgot all about her bad shoes. Over there was the campus plumed with young evergreens — a bracing atmosphere. Northward were "gym," tennis court, and "track" — Joie couldn't be pinched in this place! It was Field who mentioned the dahlias — acres of them off there in the rain-soaked distance. But one could learn enough at the greenhouse — the tiny flower farm with glass walls let down for rain and sun, lifted against frost. When it came to frost, it seemed the dahlia was about the tenderest thing there was.

It amazed Rachel Nash, what she learned about the plants growing in her red earth lot. It gave her visions. All during early dinner the rest kept looking at her high color and excited eyes.

It certainly was a good visit; even Nash admitted that. Cynthia had done well, and her father was proud of her. Field called him "Ira," and he liked that. It rained all the way home, but a cotton company's car makes nothing of softened roads. Before midnight Ira was in bed, comfortably "pounding his ear." Joie had lighted his dark-lantern, and the breakfast dishes were washed.

A worn little Bible lay open on the worktable, and by a

spent and sputtering light Rachel Nash sought and found this passage, marked: "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass." Suddenly even the sputters ceased, and she stood in darkness. There came to her senses the vile smell of charred wick mingled with the freshness of the falling rain; the sound of a rack-a-bone body turning uneasily on sagging springs. It had been months since she had dared to pray. Now she knelt.

"I'm a liar," she confessed. "It isn't for myself I ask another favor — not for myself, but mine. Please, Lord."

In Oklahoma the rain comes and goes. From a deluge the hills emerge swiftly, drying their faces in the prodigal sunshine; the lowlands gulp down the overflow. Did it rain; after all?

The Nash farm, sloping to the "bottoms," dried out moderately. Ira thought some of his cotton would have to be planted over. Not that anybody had a holiday. Joie worked around the gin, getting down weeds, scraping the yard, hauling off trash. Mother couldn't bear to look at her boy these days. She wanted him to bug his eyes and step high; yearned for him to "feed his face" imaginary biscuits and chuck his cap on bill-side behind. How stooped his nervous string of a body was growing! And vacant — no, never vacant! She longed to share with him a ray of hope; only, if she did and it failed, things would be worse than ever.

Flood had worked miracles with the dahlias — dahlias shoulder-tall and still stretching! Rachel remembered the crisp flowers, surely not more than knee-high, that grew along the walks in Ohio. Could these belong to the same family? The first thing she did, after getting back from Stillwater, was to pinch out every top, as she would later on have to cull the overplus of buds. But these plants were like children who shoot up stoop-shouldered; even tall stakes and soft, firm strings could hardly hold them straight. Then

came the midsummer heat. It was terrible, what the hot sun did to her dahlias before they were mulched. The day she carried litter from the barn and spread between the rows, she was too tired to rest.

Not that Rachel minded that if her crop flourished, and it did for a time. But when it didn't rain again for a straight month, that, too, was bad. The irregular patch of earth behind the barnyard had drawn back its parched lips when she began carrying water — enough water for a hundred plants, pumped from the deepest well on the slope! When Joie was there he helped and asked no questions. Ira's huge, solid arms made nothing of working the pump handle — for wash water. Hot weather makes much washing, and the suds Mrs. Nash carried to her dahlias would have floated a canoe. But it paid. Her back did ache continually; her arms got lame and got over it. Maybe her right arm didn't quite recover, but it would, in time.

With cultivating, and flooding, and dry-mulching on top of that, the gloomy giants picked up and went on. Here and there their enormous, long-stemmed buds laid back dazzling petals — topaz, lilac, crimson. There was one stunted dahlia that bloomed ahead of time — surely an oddity. Its center was snow, shading outward through orange to flame, and the under petals — fringed, like raveled floss — were jet black. Mrs. Nash wanted to take the strange flower up bodily and send it to Stillwater, but that would start questions. What she must have now was silence — silence and growth.

The first of September it rained, and that stopped the water carrying. There had been a season of ruin — boll weevil; gardens long dead. Rachel knew that cotton picking was a torture, ginning a nightmare, but she *worried* over her flowers slumped against their stakes! If conditions had been normal, Joie and his father would have protested against her anxious racings back and forth between the house and the dahlia lot, but they were too tired to notice. After supper,

eaten silently, they either went back to work or threw themselves on the grass, where one slept audibly and the other lay on his face without sound or motion.

High school began the first of September, though it was not mentioned in the Nash family. But Rachel thought of it terribly — it, and the blossoms that hung like dull-flaming rags on their fainting stalks. After a last visit to them, she sat on the grass in her back dooryard, letting the hot wind sift her with sand. When, before, had she been idle? Vaguely she glanced at the bermuda crusted under her supporting hand, its shimmering green a dead, winterish white. Soon the dahlias would be like that!

For days she had been searching the sky for rain. Now she narrowed her dark eyes on the taunting west and wondered. If Joie had been there — not the boy who had no pep left to sneak off with her and shake hands with Selim, but the old Joie — he would have pointed out strange impersonations on the intense blue; fat old men of gold driving crimson automobiles; gray lions with spread pinions of mauve and jade; towers of jasper; lagoons dreaming with poppies. He would have whooped when the purple martins flocking to the tall cottonwoods told the world to look out for storm; then, with a great whirring of feathers, "took off" again — round and round, till the aching splendor of the zenith was softened by whorls of wing-lace.

Maybe *he* would have known certain trampings along the parched earth as thunder. At any rate, with no more warning than that, the delayed rain was right there. All the crimson went out like a lamp; the west boiled with indigo and with black. Then a silver wall appeared in the south, and before that the wavering redness of a dust storm put out every other color — spat-spat, the deluge!

Furiously pelted, but exultant, Rachel Nash ran in to close the windows and put out the tubs. She hunted dry underwear. When her menfolks came, she was closing the oven

door on a big pan of cornbread. Nash told her the rain was too late to do any good ; it would only beat what cotton there was into the ground. He mentioned the absent check bitterly. When Joie went to sleep with his head on the table, he drove him off to bed and went himself. That was one thing in Ira Nash's favor — no matter how tired and discouraged he was, he could sleep.

All night long the rain ran on the roof, finding leaky shingles where pans had never been set. So cool it grew ; such a time to rest ! But Rachel could not relax till she had flung on an old overcoat and splashed her way to the dahlia lot. She had told herself that the plants were cooked, but when her groping fingers found a blossom — if color has a language, a blood-red blossom — oh, surely wider than a saucer ; wide as a plate ! — her hot eyes stung with tears. One who has fingered a lusty flower of the night rain knows *what* she felt !

In the utter blackness, against pressing storm, she stumbled back, threw off her wet things, and crept smilingly to bed. She had cut her hand on the wire fence, and it throbbed, but listen to the rain filling the cracked lips of her red earth, flooding the shriveled arteries of her dahlias. When she drew her arm up against blown spray from the loose-casemented window, before her pressed eyelids she saw tall blossoms — hyacinth, garnet, golden — pass in glorious procession on — and on, into dreams. Sleep had leaned on her eyes.

Joie no longer " jerked " the grudging cotton, but he could shovel cottonseed. Next morning, when he went to the gin with his father, it was still pouring rain. It poured till ten o'clock and didn't clear off then. Rachel worked by lamp-light. The dahlias were opening wide now, but gently, waiting for a touch of sun. After several trips to the lot, she went to the telephone and called up Stillwater.

It was well she did. The storm had done something to a bridge — No, *she* mustn't cut the dahlias — one had to know

how. The greenhouse man could be there in the morning. And there was talk of frost. She might do something with smudging — not likely. One had to know how — no hurt to try.

Smudging! As she hurried dinner, Mrs. Nash brought up all she knew about smudging orchards. It came back to her how her father had saved his peaches that way. Desperately she canvassed her resources; rotted fence posts with the stapled wire still hanging; limbs of dead trees that had been felled for wood; buckets and pans for dried grass and weeds — she could smudge all right. She could pin on newspapers — where went all the pins? But hairpins would do; nails, even.

One never can guess Oklahoma weather. At noon, the second of September, a smiling blue eye appeared in the heavy clouds; here and there patches of sun alternated with patches of shadow gliding like lizards down the jack-oak slopes. Four o'clock found it clear as a bell.

Frost!

Rachel Nash stood among her dahlias, her very throat aching with beauty. She moved among them like a sleep-walker, hidden in mysterious brightness. In her exultation she saw them at first but splotchily, as crimson and green lacquer spilled; as rainbows shattered. No form — just brilliance, massed. Then she questioned them singly, the giant disks; peered into their centers that still clung, slightly, as if with wet paint. Peonies — cactus blooms — anemones? They were all there.

Oh, it couldn't frost the *first* of the month; it must wait for the equinoctial storm! Yes, but the "daily" she had brought with a heap of papers for pinning had the weather forecast! Well — where were the old gloves she used in handling coal? Where was a tight box for storing plenty of matches? She must wait till things had settled down — Ira was against fires near the barn. But she'd everything ready.

Followed a frenzy of tugging and dragging and heaping. Rachel Nash worked till her hands bled. Of course, she "trigged up" for supper; she couldn't have her menfolks see her such a wreck.

Later she left the supper dishes and slipped back to light her smudge pots. She needn't have worried; Nash glanced over the cotton market and went straight to bed. When she touched off the two small brush heaps and started back to the house, fate was right there. She shivered, hearing the stiffened grass crackle under her hurrying step.

Well, Joie Nash might be just a prodded shadow, but she needed him; she had to have him. When pebbles failed as signal, she tiptoed upstairs and literally dragged him from the bed.

"Be still," she whispered, closing her smoke-smelly palm over his protesting lips. "Put on your clothes and come right along."

And when he had stumbled after her to the flower lot, she pointed out the brush pile looming sketchily on the south.

"Run and light it," she bade him firmly. "Here are some matches. Run!"

If Joie thought his mother gone crazy, there was small chance to tell her so then. She was off, gathering more sod, pinning more papers in place, running and grabbing like a player in some wild game. So Joie lighted the big heap and saw it blaze high; threw on dirt and held the flame to a smoky heat. Such a fuss over a lot of doggone posies! Joie had never, in all his life before, talked back to his mother, but he did now.

"Jumping fishhooks," he borrowed this from his father; "what d'you mean, Maw? Can't a fellow rest? Think more of these blamed old dahlias than you do of me?"

Strange that Maw could laugh! "What if I tell you," she said, jerkily stuffing grass into a rusty bucket, "that Stillwater greenhouse will give me twenty-five cents apiece for

every perfect blossom we bring out of this, and buy the tubers besides?"

And when Joie just stared at her, standing whitely between the towering, paper-tented blooms, she laughed again.

"I haven't counted the flowers exactly, but there are hundreds of them. A car will start from the college at sunup, unless I phone the frost got us. That's all, Joie. Minutes are precious. Get busy, now, and help me with this smudging. I mean it. If you don't brace up, I'll—I'll whip you."

Gee—Maw sure had gone "bugs"! But Joie got busy. *He* could locate all kinds of smudge stuff. Up and down the littered aisles he carried absurd buckets, smudging, smudging; around three sides of the lot he fed brush fires.

Whenever he began having another fit, demanding how she knew this would do any good, saying they were a pair of lunatics, Rachel Nash saw *frost*—a tall, cowled figure, hard-eyed and relentless; reaching hands that seared with whiteness; taking beauty without asking—and drove her tired accuser on. After a while she didn't laugh; she cried. Her long hair came down, and she twisted it back from her face in a fury of impatience. Her dress caught fire, and she beat it out with her bare hands.

"Stop it," Joie stormed. "Maw, you'll kill yourself!"

Then, at her swift, stinging retort, he went on like a poor crippled prisoner—up and down, around and around, an endless chase of smokes and stumbling.

Hour trod on hour—the moon went down. When darkness stooped between the flowers, Joie quit. Mother missed him and came with a glowing smudge pot to where he hunched prying his lids apart with blackened fingers, his eyes blue slits. Sitting on some scattered papers he was swaying and mumbling:

"Maw, can't a fellow—even—study? Can't—a fellow—"

Rachel stripped off her sweater and put it around him. She started to ease him down, then set her chin.

"Let him fall down," she muttered, starting on, "I'm smudging."

Till morning Maw carried her pitiful smokes alone. If she stopped at all, it was to stand at the fence and compare the whiteness beyond with where she was — and to pray. But finally it was daybreak. Far off a rooster yawned; a sleepy bird called, and another answered. The east blushed. Long stems of color grew up the sky, on which bloomed flowers of rose, of crimson, of gold. Mechanically the haggard watcher unpinned her paper tents, leaned and shook her sleeper.

"Joie, Joie!"

"Huh — huh, Maw?"

"Get up, son," Rachel lilted, "it is morning!"

Joie staggered to his feet and stood there, bewildered. Then he remembered. Dad had made him shovel cottonseed all day, and Maw had "run him ragged" all night. Gee whiz, what a world! The boy's resentful gaze turned and turned. Beyond the red earth lot lay a solid whiteness, but between the clutter of buckets and blackness, the dahlias loomed straightly, fresh and gorgeous, like the morning sky come down. No frost there!

"When the car goes back to Stillwater," Rachel said flatly, as one who knew, "you are going with it — to *stay*. You will collect for the flowers, settle for transportation, buy your books and —" she managed a grin — "get yourself a sky-blue-pink sweater. Go to the house now. Wash up and put on your school suit."

Joie Nash looked at his mother — stared at her. His shoulders went back; his chin lifted. A full minute he stood so, facing the sunrise, but he didn't see the sun. He saw what had been in his "forest of a thousand hopes" — a boy in the classroom, reciting; a bigger boy in the lecture room

— in the laboratory. A tall fellow in cap and gown, marching at the head of his class — the things he saw!

Then he choked up ; his chin twisted as when, a very little chap, he had held back tears. His arms, groping, found his mother's neck and locked there, tight.

“ Mother,” he mumbled, hoarsely sobbing — hiding his puckered face on her shoulder — “ *Mother!* ”



JENNIE HARRIS OLIVER was born in Michigan, but she lives now “ at the top of a long red hill ” in Fallis, Oklahoma. There she has known trouble and excitement, sorrow and success. She likes to write better than to do anything else, and she calls writing “ pure enchantment.”

Mrs. Oliver tells with humor of her first attempts at using a typewriter. She didn't know how to double-space, and her borrowed “ No. 3 ” was set single. She didn't know how to straight-edge with the carrier, and her left-hand margin was “ as wiggly as the right.” She had to do her writing between biscuitmaking and dishwashing, and the question of writing paper troubled her for years. Often she saved Manila wrapping paper and ironed it out smooth. She actually sold one story written on such paper in longhand.

Many of Mrs. Oliver's stories were written almost in pitch dark because her mother's eyes failed and as blindness approached grew so sensitive that she could not endure the sharpness of artificial light. But the stories almost wrote themselves: “ Grapes of Thorns,” “ Gold of Ophir,” “ The Desert Shall Blossom,” “ Pillar of Fire,” “ A Voice in the Wilderness,” “ A Watch in the Night.” The Bible gave beauty to the names. In between stories, Mrs. Oliver with the help of tramps and little colored boys made her garden, spaded ditches, and strung wires.

Good Housekeeping and other magazines bought some of the stories ; Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer bought “ Mokey ” for Jackie Cooper, a young boy at that time. Then Mrs. Oliver

lost her mother and her husband within a few months. She found release from sorrow in traveling through Oklahoma giving readings from her stories and poems, some of which by this time had found their way into high-school anthologies and had even been translated into French. One of her "Mokey" stories was translated into Spanish for Mexican children.

Ill fortune still pursued Mrs. Oliver. For weeks she lay flat and helpless with a broken back. As soon as she was released from the cast, she went by plane to be the honored guest of Lawton, Oklahoma. It was not so very long after that she found herself back in the hospital with a crushed ankle, which did not prevent her from writing however. While "all the jagged little ankle bones Dr. Ralph had sewed together neatly like a quilt-block" were healing, she continued to write.

Of all her story characters, Mrs. Oliver seems to like Joie Nash the best. She calls him affectionately "just a stoop-shouldered, undersized rack-a-bones of a boy with a penny-pinching father and a wonderful mother." There is a chance that Joie may turn up in the movies some day, so be watching for him.

A Melody Out of Tune

“I can’t help it; I am ashamed of him. Oh, I wish I was dead!” Nearly every American citizen is descended from people who were immigrants to this country. It is no disgrace to be an immigrant. Those who came here for refuge in the early days have always been revered for their courage and vision. They founded our great democracy. Then in later years came thousands from nearly every country in Europe. Most of them were of strong peasant stock. They actually built our prosperity with their patient labor. Many clung to their own language and folk customs, for they were lonely in spite of their joy at being in a free country. Their children, however, very quickly adopted the American ways of doing things and soon began to regard with shame the “queer” ways of the old people. That was the trouble in the Caluso family, and Viola Paradise tells us about it in “Alvera’s Troubadour.”

ALVERA'S TROUBADOUR

by VIOLA PARADISE

A lady, sitting at her window, put aside her book to listen to the old street harpist. Funny little wrinkled Italian, with his thin, quaint tunes and his grotesque posture as he bent over his harp — for he played standing. But his music had real feeling and taste, and she had got into the habit of expecting him mornings.

This was the first time he had come on a Sunday. And partly because of something in the shaky, sad tunes which she had never noticed before, partly for the luxury of feeling rich, she tossed him half a dollar.

He thought it was a mistake and came up to her window.

“No,” she said, “it’s because I like your music.”

“You like? I play you ‘nother one.”

He stayed half an hour playing, saying after each tune, “You like? I play you ‘nother one,” with somewhat disturbing eagerness. At last he finished. Then he went up to the window and wanted to return the fifty cents. The lady insisted, and he kept the money reluctantly.

Suddenly he brightened. “I show my granddaughter,” he said. “If you don’t-a like you don’t-a give the fifty cent, no? Ecco!”

He hurried away. But at the corner he turned and came back. The lady smiled at him, and he said timidly, “Please, missis, you write on one piece-a-da-paper you like-a my music?”

She was puzzled. Then she understood that he wanted a testimonial. Laughing, she wrote it, in red ink, with flourishes. He thanked her, choking a little, and was off before she could ask him why he wanted the piece of paper.

The day before, old Mr. and Mrs. Caluso had neglected their breakfast at the kitchen table. They talked Italian in subdued tones, Mr. Caluso with deprecating gesture and voice.

"It's nothing, nothing. She is fifteen. At fifteen, especially girls — perhaps growing pains . . ."

"But she is well. I ask her what's a matter? Always in the English. But she says only, 'Nothing,' impatient. For the six days she doesn't play the music. Always, like today, she sits at the piano, silent, staring, like snow."

"It is nothing; do not worry, little Grandmother." He picked up his coffee cup. Then, suddenly, an idea struck him. "I know what's the matter. She has the talent, no? It is the temperament. You know the temperament, he goes with music." He began gesturing, coffee cup in hand. "When I was fifteen, I also had the temperament! I —"

"Look, you are spilling the coffee."

"No," she continued, after wiping the floor, "no. I think in America people don't have the temperament. But you talk to her. If it is the temperament, tell her how you got cured of it. You and she have always been the nearest friends in this house. Maybe she will tell you what's the matter."

Mr. Caluso put down his cup and with a sigh threw off all pretense of lightness. "I can't talk to her. I try. It is 'Yes, Grandfather,' and 'No, Grandfather.' Grandfather! No more funny sweet names, just Grandfather. I said, 'Come, Alvera, you play the piano and I'll play the harp, like many evenings!' But she shivers and say, 'Oh, no!' She doesn't talk, she answers only."

Now his wife took upon herself the task of comforter. "Maybe she works too hard with her music and the high school. Maybe she does not understand the lesson. Geometry, it must be very hard: she could not make me see the sense of it. I think she does not understand the geometry."

Mr. Caluso considered. "No," he concluded. "It is not the geometry; she said that was the easiest for her even though she could not explain it. The English she said was hardest. I said, 'That's funny, Alvera, you were born in America, not greenhorn like me.' Then she said maybe it was the way we talk at home. So I said, in English, like this, 'Ecco! From now your grand-a-mother and me, we talk-a to you just the English. That make you do better the English lesson, no?' Then she laughed, but without spirit, and said, 'You nice old goose, I 'fraid it's-a too late,' and she kissed me at the top where I am bald and said my head was like little skating pond in the park with frosty bushes all 'round.' The old man laughed, then sighed. "Only that was before this — temperament. Well, pazienza, she must get over it. Now I take my harp and set about my business."

Suddenly the sound of a Chopin waltz came from the "parlor." The old couple looked at each other with pleased surprise.

"Ecco!" exclaimed Mr. Caluso. "What have I said? It was the temperament. She is all right."

"The saints grant it!" His wife spoke with little conviction and detained him as he started for the parlor. "Let her first finish the waltz. If you disturb her maybe she'll go back into your — your temperament again."

In the parlor Alvera knew she was playing badly, without expression, slighting the difficult places. At any other time since Monday she would have thought herself too miserable to care; but now, with her music lesson only three hours off and the realization that she could not give herself up entirely to her unhappiness, she knew it was useless to dwell upon the

imagined relief of pouring out her trouble to Miss Wade. And yet if she began, "I'm unhappy because my grandfather goes about the street with a harp and a copper cup for pennies," Miss Wade would reply — no, she could not think what Miss Wade would reply. But she would continue, "I didn't realize the disgrace of it till I overheard the geometry teacher say to the English teacher, 'Those organ grinders are no better than beggars. I'd respect them more if they'd beg outright instead of making an outrageous noise.'"

At this point in her imaginings Alvera would either weep luxuriously at some fancied comforting from Miss Wade or, faced with the terrible, unyielding reality of her trouble, with the fact that nothing Miss Wade would say could change the shameful truth, would sit silent and grim at the piano, her slim white hands limp in her lap.

Today, with the music lesson imminent, these invented conversations with Miss Wade seemed absurd. For they had never had any personal conversation. Always their talk had been of music, when by chance they had sat side by side at a public concert.

"Why did you shake your head?" Miss Wade had asked the dark-eyed girl. Alvera was then only twelve.

"Did I shake my head? It didn't feel right. One part went so —" here she had hummed a few phrases. "It should have gone like this —" here she hummed again — "more singing, not so loud and grand." Then Miss Wade, impressed with a girl so musically alert that she could know and express exactly in what respect the music had failed to satisfy her, had offered to teach Alvera. And from that time Alvera had gone to her studio on Saturday mornings.

A precious, magic hour, an hour to be waited for all week. Yet once there, it was all very impersonal. Almost, thought Alvera once, as if Miss Wade did not want her adoration. For if she showed it ever so slightly, Miss Wade almost ceased to be Miss Wade: all her attention was focused on

the piano, on the music. But sometimes, if Alvera was casual, Miss Wade — homely, middle-aged, gray-haired — would talk about it, would draw her out. And at these times Miss Wade seemed young again and looked “like sunshine,” Alvera thought to herself.

Yet she could not tell her trouble to Miss Wade. Supposing Miss Wade should be contemptuous? Alvera shuddered. She thought of the change that too often came over her teacher, from the kindly smile of greeting to the challenging, exacting attitude of instructor. How dared she go to her lesson? Frantically, as if to shake off her misery by force, she had plunged into the gay Chopin waltz.

As she finished, her grandfather stood in the doorway. “Bravo!” he cried. “One little bit more joy, Alvera, and it is perfect!”

She wheeled about suddenly and saw him waiting, embarrassed, for an answer. After a moment’s silence, he shrugged his shoulders, went awkwardly to the corner where his harp stood, picked it up, and was about to leave the room, when Alvera cried out in anguish, “Grandfather!”

He put the harp down and went over to her. “What is it, little one? Something is wrong, no?”

“Grandfather, I’ll stop taking music lessons. I’ll go to work in a factory. I can’t bear to have you going round with the harp.” She stopped short at his amazed stare. No, it was too cruel, she could not say it. So she added lamely, “In all this weather.”

“What’s this? What’s this? A factory! You! Born in America and to go in a factory. Oh, poveretta! So that’s what make you sorry, so sad, Alvera? That’s why you all the time so — so . . .” He could not find the word he wanted, and gave it up. “Oh, carina mia, you make-a the worry about me! Why, I’m strong! Not-a like these young American men — catch-a cold, sneeze, sneeze, every bad weather! Your grand-a-father verra strong man, Alvera.

You see these ten fingers that make with the harp so sweet music? These fingers can crack the brazil nut, and don't-a make-a trouble over it, too."

He was touched at her anxiety for him and went on to reassure her. "Why, my flower, because I gotta the sixty-five years — that's nothing. I gotta not one drop rheumatism. I can go yet twenty-five years more, making the music with the harp, bread and music, and music lessons for Alvera, and something pretty — ha-ha! you cannot guess what — for Alvera for Christmas. I'm verra, verra strong old man."

Alvera burst into tears, could answer nothing. He patted her head, told her to blow her nose and to smile. She contrived, after some time, to control herself, and at last could say, "I'm all right now."

After a while he took his harp and went out, trying to believe he had ended her troubles. But when he had left the house Alvera, her elbows on the piano, sobbed over again, "I can't bear it, I can't bear it!"

Her grandmother, who had heard the conversation from the kitchen, did not interrupt her grief. The old woman, to her terror, had suddenly understood. She knew that this new threatened misery could not be so lightly dispelled. Her heart sank. Pity welled up in her, pity for all of them; for her husband first, and herself, and — more tardily — for the girl. "She is ashamed of us," she said to herself.

Two hours later — hours of alternate weeping and sitting at the piano — Alvera started out. It was a cold, crisp day. Her head, hot, confused, throbbing from a week of sleeplessness and worry and many tears, was cooled by the hour's walk against the wind. She reached the studio early, in time to hear the last fifteen minutes of another lesson.

But the sudden clearness of her mind only brought a new distress. If it was true — and oh, it was, she cried to herself — that she was giving up her music, then what was she doing here? Why had she come for a lesson?

At this moment she heard Miss Wade's voice, sharp and contemptuous, saying to the other pupil, "We'll finish this hour, but it's the last. My conscience won't let me continue to accept your father's ten dollars a lesson when you don't take your music seriously."

Ten dollars a lesson! But she, Alvera, was paying only fifty cents. She had known that Miss Wade had reduced the price for her, but that the usual price was ten dollars — incredible! Why, it was charity! Miss Wade was giving her the lessons and letting her pay the fifty cents only to keep her self-respect!

Mixed feelings seethed within her. Her adoration of Miss Wade swamped her tragedy. She felt choked with her love and gratitude. And then: "Someday I'll pay it all back, when I'm earning money, when I'm giving lessons, or concerts."

Only that was never to be. She thought of her grandfather. She was not going to be a musician, she was going to work in a factory. She must leave at once. She must not take this lesson, must not add to her debt. She must go before the other pupil came out. She must get up and leave.

But she could not get up and leave. It would mean — why, it would mean dropping music out of her life. Like dropping one's heart out of one's body! And to leave Miss Wade — Miss Wade, who had made music real and living to her, Miss Wade whom she adored . . .

She felt sick.

Yet she must leave, she must drop her heart out of her body. That was what she had known, deep down inside her, all week. To go to work in a factory, dipping chocolates, or wrapping cigars, or making buttonholes.

She would rest a minute, her heart was beating so. There were still a few minutes . . .

Or no, she must stay and tell Miss Wade. She would say . . . Impossible, she would go, at once, right this minute.

Only she could not make herself go. She must see Miss Wade once more — this one last lesson. Then she would write a letter. And suddenly Miss Wade was saying in her warm, genial tone of greeting, "Good morning, Alvera. But, dear, what's the matter?"

Alvera struggled for words. The things she wanted to say she could not. What she said had nothing to do with the turbulent chaos of her feelings: she was surprised to hear the words come from her mouth. "I'm not prepared for my lesson; I've scarcely touched the piano all week."

Miss Wade thought, "She is upset." Aloud she said gently, "Well, perhaps you had some good reason. We'll see what we can do." And she put her hand on Alvera's shoulder as they went into the studio.

Alvera, struggling against tears, said fiercely to herself that tomorrow she would write Miss Wade a letter; today she would have this one last hour, she would forget everything in the world but her music and Miss Wade.

Hard work, well loved, is a tonic to the spirit. When she left the studio, her troubles and her resolutions were not forgotten, but the glow of the past hour was still warming her, and she postponed her grief. She let herself think only of Miss Wade. If only she could do something for Miss Wade, something heroic, something dangerous, something demanding unheard-of courage, something to show she held her own life as nothing against any danger that might threaten Miss Wade. For several blocks she imagined impossible scenes in which, having rescued Miss Wade from peril, she modestly disclaimed all credit. Then her mind dropped back to the bad fifteen minutes just before her lesson, when she had heard the contempt in Miss Wade's voice to the other pupil. Then she had scarcely noticed it, but now, looking back, it seemed a terrible thing. "I could not have endured it," she said to herself.

Then she thought of her grandfather.

It must end. This morning she had not had the courage, he had looked so sorry, his merry wrinkles all turned sad, his grizzly hair all rumpled at the back, where he ran his hands through it in his distress. He was so good and kind; she loved him. But it must end. It would be terrible to say what she must say to her grandfather. Terrible to give up music lessons. Most terrible of all not to see Miss Wade again. Tomorrow morning, immediately after breakfast, she would tell her grandfather the truth; she would write the letter to Miss Wade.

She walked home with a dead step, dragging dead hopes and dreams.

Miss Wade found herself thinking about Alvera all day; a picture of the white, distressed girl kept intruding upon other lessons. She wondered about Alvera's home life. She had wondered before, but she was a busy person, and asking questions took time. She wished she knew all about Alvera. After all, why hadn't she worked at her music that week? Perhaps the girl had been really unhappy about something. "Oh, but that shouldn't be! Such a lovely young thing, such a vivid, flamelike girl!"

That evening in her mail she found some concert tickets for the next afternoon. "I'll take them to Alvera tomorrow," she thought. "That will give me a chance to find out what was the matter."

The next morning, entering the hall of the tenement in which her notebook told her Alvera lived, she collided with an old man carrying a harp. She almost laughed at the suddenness of the encounter, but a glance at the man's face sobered her. It was tragic — tortured. In an impulse to detain him, she asked, before he stumbled past her, "Do the Calusos live in this building?"

He made a queer soblike sound in his throat, his thumb pointed over his shoulder. Then he was out in the street.

At the door, before she found the bell, she heard a quaver-

ing old voice say persuasively, "But, Alvera, your grandfather!" And she heard Alvera reply, "I can't help it; I am ashamed of him. Oh, I wish I was dead!"

Miss Wade caught her breath, almost in panic. Then it was a real trouble. She pulled herself together and knocked. There was a moment's silence before the door opened and Alvera's grandmother stood there, white and trembling.

"I'm Alvera's music teacher."

Alvera, flushed, leaning against the upright piano that stood across one corner, jumped as she saw Miss Wade, uttered an anguished "Oh!" and rushed from the room. Old Mrs. Caluso stared after her a moment, then turned and motioned Miss Wade to sit down, and sat down herself on the edge of a rocking chair. At first she could not speak; she glanced about the room as if for help.

"Are you in trouble?" Miss Wade asked simply. "I'm sorry."

Mrs. Caluso, old and little, was silent a moment. Her hands tightly clenched the arms of the rocker. Presently she said, "Your must-a be verra smart lady. Alvera love you verra much. Maybe you can help us, yes? We gotta beeg-a tristezza — how you say? — affliction. You know our girl, Alvera — allatime verra good, happy girl. She and her grand-a-father make-a like two friends. But for one week now, something it ees wrong. She make-a the practice five minutes. Then she ees stop. I say, 'What's-a the matter?' She say, 'Nothing,' but she ees cry. Yesterday she play one little bit. But worst is come this morning. Seven o'clock. She ees practice verra nice, fifteen minutes. Then, subitaneo — how you say? — sudden? Sudden comes verra bad noise. Every sound on the piano, all together. Dio mio, horrible noise! We run to the parlor. 'What's-a matter? What's-a matter?' She ees crying, 'I can't stand, I can't stand!' All-a time her grand-a-father, just like a friend, say, 'Cara, what's-a matter?' Then she say, sudden, 'I can't stand.'

I'm shame of you. You can go around just-a like one beggar-man! ' To her grand-a-father she say that! Now, signorina, what can we do? She is shame of us."

Miss Wade said, "Oh!" in a tone of understanding and distress, and cast about in her mind for words, indeed for something deeper than words, to meet this situation. Mrs Caluso did not wait for an answer, but spoke again. She told how the grandfather was at first too stunned and hurt to speak. And then he had said, "in a lost voice," that he was not a beggar, but a musician, an artist — not like a man with a grind organ and a monkey; that people paid him because they liked his music, that it was an honorable profession — more honorable, even, than that of his son, who was a prospering barber in New York, because music was an art. But Alvera had said No, his music was not good; people gave him money only because he was old and they were sorry for him. She had begged him to throw away his harp, had said she was going to give up her music and would stop school and go to work in the factory, and they should sell the piano — anything, anything they wanted, only she could not bear to have her grandfather a beggar!

Miss Wade interrupted, "I'll try to make her see how wrong she is." The words were carefully chosen and spoken in a tone of firm confidence, far beyond her real feeling, in order to give comfort to this little old woman whose own pride had been wounded by her granddaughter's shame. Mrs. Caluso seized eagerly at the hope she supplied.

"Ecco! You think it no ees begging, this playing with the harp? I will bring Alvera."

Alvera came into the room, not timidly, not crying, but with the dry tragic dignity that utter despair bestows. Yet it was not quite utter despair, for her eyes searched Miss Wade's face to see whether contempt were written there.

Miss Wade, overwhelmed with pity, was silent a moment. It would have been so easy to put her arms about Alvera, to

speak comforting words, to tell her not to be absurd, that her grandfather's occupation was not begging. That would smooth things out for a while; for she knew Alvera loved her much, and could guess that the girl loved her grandfather enough to grasp hungrily at anything which would make it possible to go on with her music, with life in general as it had been.

But this would not be honest comforting — nor permanent. She must not depend on Alvera's adoration. It was a matter to be worked out by head, not by heart.

“Sit down, Alvera.” She motioned to the space beside her on the stiff, unyielding sofa. “We must think. Now, what do you think you would like your grandfather to do? Of course you know he would be unhappy idle, even if it should be easy for him to give up his music.”

Nothing she could have said could have surprised Alvera more. The girl was perforce dumb.

“Surely,” Miss Wade went on relentlessly, “surely you have not asked him to give up his harp without having something else in mind for him?”

She waited. At last Alvera answered in a faint voice, “I didn't think that far. I only know that I can't bear — that I'm ashamed of his begging.”

“Begging? Does he beg?”

“It's the same thing. He goes about with his harp, and people throw him coins.”

Then Miss Wade had an inspiration. “My dear girl, what you need is some knowledge of the history of music!”

And she plunged into an account of ancient singers and traveling bards in the days centuries before any music had been printed. And soon her voice was warm, and her eyes glowed with that look “like sunshine” that always so deeply stirred Alvera, and she talked on of twelfth- and thirteenth-century troubadours, and trouvères, and jongleurs, and ciarlatani; of their going from France to Italy in the days

before Dante, of their making music and poetry, of their going from castle to castle and from village green to village green for the people.

“They were makers and scatterers and recorders of poetry. If it had not been for them, the world would be poorer to-day.”

The grandmother, her hands clutching the arms of the rocker, leaned forward hungrily, only half understanding. Alvera listened wide-eyed, wanting terribly to be convinced. At least, she thought fervently, at least Miss Wade was not contemptuous.

When Miss Wade paused, Alvera struggled to get control of her voice. “You think, then, it is not begging?” she urged.

“Of course not. He is doing something he considers art.”

“Oh, but it is not art. His music is thin and — simple and poor!”

“There are many kinds of music and many kinds of people. As wonderful a man as Tolstoi has said that the greatest art is that which the simplest people can enjoy. Your beloved Chopin used simple Polish folk songs. But when —” Miss Wade shifted the trend of her talk — “when did you begin to think your grandfather’s music poor? Your grandmother says you used to enjoy playing with him.”

Alvera winced but did not answer.

“You think it is different! But even,” Miss Wade went on deliberately — “even if he played a grind organ, if he got pleasure from it, you would have no right to stop him until you had something else to suggest that he could do and enjoy as much. You’ve scarcely the right to deprive another person of his occupation.”

Alvera looked eagerly into Miss Wade’s face for help, for guidance. But Miss Wade was not helping her, was only making it more difficult. She was saying, “Imagine your-

self in his place. How would you feel? What would you do?"

And suddenly Alvera began to feel ashamed. She struggled against it, struggled to see herself as she had that morning, all that terrible long week — an object of scorn to her fellow schoolmates if only they knew about her grandfather. And now, instead of pity, it was her own scorn rising, her scorn for herself, that Miss Wade had made her feel. And it was worse than Miss Wade's contempt would have been. Yet she would defend herself against it, would make Miss Wade understand how it felt to be the granddaughter of a street harpist.

"If it were your grandfather," she cried, "wouldn't you be ashamed?"

The words were scarcely out of her mouth when she felt how easy it would be for Miss Wade to say No, a simple No. Yet, though she resented the ease with which an outsider could say this little word, she yearned eagerly for the No. If Miss Wade would not be ashamed, surely it must be all right. And if Miss Wade said it, she would mean it: she was so frank, so direct.

Miss Wade did not say No, simply. She stopped to think. Then she said, "I suppose it is as hard for me to put myself in your place as it is for you to put yourself in your grandfather's. But I hope — I hope that even if my grandfather were an organ grinder, I would have the courage to let him live his own life. Perhaps I should not have that much courage, but I hope —"

Alvera suddenly broke down and wept. That word courage so accidentally hit upon by Miss Wade suddenly reminded her of her daydreams of yesterday, as she walked away from her music lesson. She, this cowardly thing that she was, had imagined herself rescuing Miss Wade from some danger! She, who was ashamed of her grandfather be-

cause of a few sentences overheard by chance, because of someone else's opinion.

Her face in her hands, her head on her knees, she swayed in a paroxysm of weeping, of self-hatred.

At last her sobs quieted, but she still sat bent over, breathing convulsively. Miss Wade, to keep herself from comforting Alvera, turned to the old woman and began questioning her about her life and her husband's in Italy and America. And as Mrs. Caluso answered the questions gently, always with half an eye on Alvera's suffering form, Miss Wade felt doubly sorry for the girl. For the old woman told, among other things, of the death of Alvera's parents when she was a baby — how her grandparents had taken her, loved her — how almost the first word Alvera had learned to say was "moosic" — how even before that she would creep to the harp and make her grandfather understand that she wanted him to play it to her. Presently Alvera, silent and calm, lifted her head and looked at her grandmother with questioning eyes.

How would it all end, wondered Miss Wade uneasily? She was waiting for Alvera to say something.

There were footsteps in the hall, the door opened, and old Mr. Caluso stumbled into the room. He was breathless, he ignored the stranger.

"See, see, Alvera!" he exclaimed, holding out a piece of paper.

But Alvera did not look at the paper. She flew to him, his arms were about her. "Oh, Grandfather!" she sobbed. "I'm so ashamed of myself!"



VIOLA PARADISE always cherished an ambition to be a writer. She was born in Chicago and was graduated from the University of Chicago. Her first position was that of special government agent for the United States Children's

Bureau, and she worked also with the Immigrants' Protective League. These jobs took her all over the United States investigating the welfare of children not only in the large cities, but in the sparsely settled areas. She naturally had to write extensive reports of her findings, and this activity stimulated her early love of writing. Experience she had in plenty; she had seen sorrow and happiness, comedy and tragedy, natural beauty, and every aspect of human life. All she had to do was to put it down; and this she did, writing stories, articles, poems, plays, and novels. She wrote her way through Europe, sending back many interesting articles, especially about the people of the Balkan States.

Miss Paradise is deeply interested in people. She sees the story value in all their experiences and writes of them sympathetically. Her early dream has come true, and she now devotes her time entirely to writing. Be on the lookout for her rather unusual name.

Five Keys to a Car

“A chicken in every pot and a car in every garage.” That is the way many people gauge prosperity. Well, one chicken makes a skimpy meal for a family, and one car doesn’t go around much better. The question of who shall have the family car is a daily headache for the head of the family, and he sometimes wonders who owns the thing anyway. It makes cheerful reading to discover how one mother solved the question on a certain Sunday when things just got too much for her. Perhaps a word of warning should be spoken—if the use of the car is a domestic problem in your house, better not leave this book around where your mother will be likely to discover it and read the following story. She might get ideas!

THE CAR

by DOROTHY THOMAS

Mrs. Joseph Barton woke at two minutes of seven, and at once sat bolt upright in bed, like a woman who has set her mind and heart, like a clock, on waking at a certain time because she has something special planned.

Only moments later her husband woke and squinted sleepily at her where she stood, across the room from the bed, and said, "Say, am I seeing things, or are you going through my pockets?"

Mrs. Barton laughed and blushed a little. "I am," she said, "or I was, rather. These pants are going to the cleaner's. You said, 'Aw, I've already got them on,' the last time. Your stuff's right here." She dropped some coins, a key ring and a jackknife into a tray on the dresser. Some empty chewing-gum wrappers she tossed into the wastebasket.

"All right," Mr. Barton said. "I'm not wearing them anyhow. I'm wearing my golf pants. Don't you know what day this is? This is Sunday, Sally."

"I know it," Mrs. Barton said, "and I'm glad it's here. It's a lovely day too. Lovely." She swung up from a third "fingers-touch-toes" to pant the second, "Lovely." Her cheeks were very pink. Mr. Barton would likely have remarked on her pink cheeks and her general good looks, had he been watching her, but he had already shut his eyes again for a last forty winks.

Dressed, Mrs. Barton went to her sons' room. It was a

habit with her to look in on the boys and on Sara Louise, too, before going down to get breakfast. They were both sleeping so soundly that they did not hear her: Dick with one hand resting, palm up, on the floor, like an idler in a boat, Sally thought, and Davie lying biasly in his wide bed, his lean, tanned arms and legs outflung, as though he might have been dropped from a height. Almost soundlessly Sally picked up some of their clothes and hung them in their wardrobe. She lowered the blind so that the sun would not shine on Dick's handsome forehead and went out quietly and into her girl's room.

Sara Louise was sleeping curled in a ball, like a creature hibernated, her rather long, yellow bob making a blurred halo round her head on the pillow. All that she had had on the night before made a larger and still more indefinite halo round the place where she had stood for her two A.M. undressing.

As quietly as she had picked up her sons' clothes Mrs. Barton gathered up Sara Louise's stockings, panties, slip, shoes, dress, and pocketbook. It was the click of the pocketbook fastener that woke Sara Louise, and made her say, without opening her eyes, "That you, Mother? Will you turn off the light, please? It's right in my eyes."

"It's not the light, dear, it's the sun. I'll draw the blind."

"Um, thanks," Sara Louise murmured, and curled, the ball she was, a little tighter.

Mrs. Barton went downstairs and out to the kitchen. "I'll make waffles," she said, and brought the crock she used for waffle batter from the pantry, and eggs and milk from the refrigerator. While she worked she hummed.

She spread a cloth and set five places in the breakfast porch. Waffles were best, of course, straight from the waffle iron, but Davie, who ate most, was grateful for numbers and was always pleased when he came down to find three or four baked and ready for him. When she had three waffles made,

she began to call them to wake up and to get downstairs. "Breakfast!" she shouted. "Waffles!"

They would know it was first come, first served. Mr. Barton was first. "Well, Sally, waffles?" he said.

"Yes," Mrs. Barton replied. "Will you have some of Davie's or will you wait for the next one? It's all but ready."

"I'll wait, my dear. Did you bring in the paper? Ah!" Mr. Barton saw that Sally had brought in the paper and put it by his plate. He was highly pleased with himself to be up before either of the boys; to have the paper, fresh and unfolded, before family hand had touched it.

"Here's your waffles, Joe," Sally Barton said. "Will you have sirup or honey? There's jelly too."

"Ah," Mr. Barton said again, and slipped the paper under the table. There it should lie, on the knees of the god of the house, until such time as, full of waffles, he should be ready to read it. He smiled up at his wife as she poured his coffee. "You know, I want to get out there," he confided. "When Sunday comes, I'm like a kid; can't wait to get my putter in my hands."

"It's a lovely day," Mrs. Barton said once more. "Here's another waffle."

Davie was next down. "Morning, Mother. Morning, Dad," he said with that deference that comes on a sixteen-year-old when he has something to ask for, something he wants much.

"Here're your waffles, Davie," his mother said. "Four."

"That'll do fine to start on," Davie said, and grinned up at her. "You sure can sling a wicked waffle, Mom."

"Thank you," Mrs. Barton said. "Is Dick up?"

"I don't know."

"Is he awake?"

"I don't know; kinda, I guess."

"How does it come you don't know?" his father asked. "Isn't he up there?"

"Sure, he's up there," Davie said, "but he can't see me; why should I see him?"

"What are you talking about?" his father asked. "Why can't Dick see you? Is there something wrong with him?"

"Far as I'm concerned there is," Davie answered. "So long as he can't see me."

Mr. Barton looked up at his wife as though to ask what kind of sons she'd raised for him, anyway.

"He means Dick is feeling his age," Mrs. Barton explained gently, "and the gulf there is fixed, between sixteen and twenty."

"Um," Mr. Barton said in his throat, in the way he had when he was ready to have them consider a question closed, and took the paper from under the table. The first waffle eaten, he was ready to divide his attention between others and the Sunday morning's news.

"He gives me a pain," Davie said, and they knew he spoke of his brother and not his father.

"Well, never mind, dear," Mrs. Barton said. "Just a moment and there'll be another waffle. . . . Oh, good morning, Richard."

Dick came in dressed in an old pair of coveralls, open at the neck. "Good morning, Mother. Good morning, Dad," he said, and sat down across from Davie.

"And good morning, Davie," his mother said. Dick looked across the table at Davie, and said, as though he was ready to do most anything to please his mother on such a lovely morning, "Good morning, Dave."

David ducked him a drawn-mouthed bow.

"Let's have the sports section, Dad," Dick said, and reached for the paper.

"I'll take the funnies," Davie echoed.

"Well, now, here," Mr. Barton said. "You boys just wait a little and you can have the whole paper. You eat your breakfast first."

"What you so dolled up about?" Davie asked Dick, in the silence made heavy with Dick's resentment.

"None of your beeswax," Dick said.

Mrs. Barton laughed. "Why, we used to say that when we were children," she said pleasantly. "'None of your beeswax.' Where'd you ever get it, son? I've not heard that in years. What would you think, Davie? My guess would be that Dick is going to wash the car."

"Right," said Dick.

"I thought you'd be wanting to wash it, and so I backed it out," Mrs. Barton said. "It's out by the hydrant and ready."

"That's mighty nice of you, Mother," Dick said. "Thanks. Got another of those waffles ready?"

"Dad," Davie said, "I wanna ask you something."

"Eh, what, son?" Mr. Barton said, and looked round the paper. He was holding the whole of it in his two hands before him. It was awkward to hold it so, but he would hardly have had the face to lay the sport section and the funnies down on the table beside him, or on his knees, having denied them to his sons.

"Ya," Davie said, and choked down a large sirupy bite, "wouldn't you think, if a fellow had had the car just once, just one Sunday, and then just for a measly little old two hours, he could have it again, for a day like this, for today? Can I have the car, Dad?"

Mr. Barton began to fold the paper, section by section, and to lay the sections beside his plate and press the folds down with the palms of his hands. "Well, I'll tell you, son," he said, but his older boy interrupted him. "Some Sunday, likely you may," he said to Davie, "but I'd suggest you wait until you know a little more about driving a car before you—"

Sara Louise had come through the kitchen and onto the sunny breakfast porch that might, had Mrs. Barton been a

less imaginatively gifted woman, have been a plain back porch. It was necessary for Dick to get up, so that she could get past him to her place. She kept him waiting while she opened the screen door and reached up for a morning-glory bloom and slipped it behind her ear. "What's this about the car?" she asked, when she was seated.

"Here," her father said, "you take this waffle, Sara Louise; I've had plenty, plenty."

"I was just explaining to Davie here, when you made your entrance," Dick said in a tone not quite free of brotherly irony, "the reason he can't have the car today, for the second Sunday in his licensed driving life."

"Oh," Sara Louise said coolly, "that's interesting, but I scarcely see how you could have, not knowing. Honey, please, Dad.

"I'm sorry, Davie. Maybe you can have the car next Sunday, or Sunday after next, if you can talk Dick into giving up his turn. Today I have to have it."

"No, you don't," Dick said positively.

"Oh, but I do!" Sara Louise said to him, over the rim of her coffee cup. "I have a date, a picnic date, and I'll need the car for the entire day. . . . You know, I told you, Father, Tuesday afternoon, that I should need the car all day today."

"Where are you going, daughter?" Mrs. Barton asked. . . . "Are you ready for a waffle, Dick?"

"The Falls," Sara Louise answered. "I forgot to tell you, Mother, I said I'd take lunch, a picnic lunch. . . .

"Davie, have you found the stopper to the vacuum jug yet? . . . Mother, I don't think you ought to let Davie take the vacuum, if he's going to lose—"

"Now, here, just a minute, sister," Dick said. "Let's get this straight. If you're going on a picnic to the Falls, you'd better call that guy, whoever he is, and tell him you're sorry, but if he's going with you he'll have to come across with the

whitherwithal, because it just happens you don't have the car for today. I'm using the car. I'm going out and wash it, right after breakfast, and then at two o'clock this afternoon I'm going to be needing it and I'm going to be using it. You'd better phone your date, if you think he's up, as soon as you get away with that waffle. I have a date, myself, and I served notice, no later than Wednesday noon, that I'd be needing the car this Sunday, as Mother, here, will verify."

"Wednesday noon," Sara Louise mocked. "You're late. . . . Isn't he, Father? . . . You're too late. In fact; you've missed the boat. I spoke for the car for this Sunday, Tuesday afternoon, didn't I, Dad?"

"Is this waffle to go begging?" Mrs. Barton asked.

"Nope," Davie said. "Give 'er here! That's the way it is; that's the way it goes; other families, other kids, but not in this house. All the time, before I could drive, before I got my license, it was, 'Now you wait, Davie; a few months and your turn will come,' but that was just hooey. Now I got my license and does it make any difference? Now it's just —" His voice trailed off in despair.

"Mother," Mr. Barton said, his hand firm on the folded paper, "have you, by any chance, set your heart on having the car for today, along with these three children?"

"Why, no, Joe," Mrs. Barton said. "No, I haven't. I don't want the car. I thought — I decided last night that if today was a lovely day, like it looked like it was going to be, I'd go for a walk, a good long walk. No, I don't need the car; I don't want it."

"Well," Mr. Barton said, and doubled his fist and brought it down on the folded paper, "that's fine! That's good! I'm glad, Sally, that you don't want the car and haven't counted on it, for that makes just three people who'll have to be disappointed instead of four, and I'd hate to disappoint you anyway, being you so seldom ask for the car, for I need the car, and I have to have it myself. I've made plans."

Sara Louise set down her coffee cup that she had been sipping from while she held it in both her slender hands, and looked at her father with a smile she'd had good reason to count on all her nineteen years. "That's all right, Daddy," she said. "You want to go out to the club, don't you? You want to play golf? Well, I can take you out. I can take you out just as well as not, drop you out there. It won't be but a little out of my way. . . . Mother, may I have that chicken that's in the icebox? There's not enough for the family and I — "

"I was going to make chicken sandwiches for supper," Mrs. Barton said, "but never mind. You take it, Sara Louise."

"Well, I like that," Davie cried. "What's the idea? She gets the car and she gets — "

"No, son," Mr. Barton said. "This time she doesn't get the car, and Dick doesn't get it either. Didn't you hear me say, Sara Louise, 'I have to have it'? I've made plans."

"But good night, Dad," Dick said. "I've got this date! I've had it since Wednesday. You can't wait until the last minute and call a girl up and tell her you can't take her. You can't — "

"That's what I was trying to tell you," Sara Louise cried. "I've had this date since Tuesday morning! I met Lyle downtown and — "

"Oh, for crying out loud!" Davie howled. "Are you going with him? . . . Mamma, don't you let her have that chicken. She's got a date with that old Lyle! . . . Sis, what you want to go with him for?"

"What's wrong with him?" Sara Louise countered.

"Nothin'; he's just nuts, that's all."

"I tell you, Dad, I have this date," Dick said again. "I simply have to have the car. I'll go out and wash it now."

"Sally," Mr. Barton appealed to his wife, "you know how it is. Every Sunday — yes, every Sunday this summer, and

all but a couple, if I'm not mistaken, last summer, when I wanted to play golf, I had to make arrangements for someone to stop by for me, for someone to pick me up; and not once did I have the car, I tell you, not once, this summer long."

"It's only the third week in June, dear," Mrs. Barton said sweetly. "Maybe—"

"'Maybe,' that's it!" Mr. Barton said. "I tell you, things are wrong, all wrong. You kids, all kids, just live in a world of their own, and think the world turns round them. You don't a one of you, ever, give one thought to the happiness, to the personal happiness of your elders, your parents. While we—why, look what we do! That's a fact! I've not had that car once, not one Sunday, since it thawed."

"Gosh, Dad," Davie said, in honest admiration, "you been going to lectures or something?"

"But, Daddy, I told you," Sara Louise said. "I'll take you out, and there'll be someone there you can ride in with, and next Sunday—"

"It's going to be this Sunday!" Mr. Barton yelled. "This Sunday! I got tired, I got ashamed, of having to beg and borrow rides. Yesterday I asked two friends, Blaine and Morrow, to drive out with me; to drive out in my car—my car, do you get me, my car!" Mr. Barton rolled the folded newspaper and struck it smartly on the edge of the table.

"Mom made the down payment," Davie said irrelevantly.

"That's right; that's right," Mr. Barton said more quietly. "That's right, she did. 'Twas her money, and it was a mighty fine thing for her to do. She did it for us; she did it for you children; and how much do you repay her for it? How much does she get to use the car? You see, you just think of yourselves. You just—"

"I don't want the car, Joe," Mrs. Barton said. "I told you I'm going for a walk. I think I'll put a couple of sand-

wishes in a bag, and an apple, and not come home for lunch, just walk and walk. I planned it last night. You know, Joe, I was thinking of how, when they were little, that summer before we got our first car, how we used to take them all for a walk, and you'd pick Sara Louise up and carry her when she got tired."

"And I bet that was darn soon," Dick said. "Now, Dad, I see how you're fixed, and I'll take you out there, just as soon as I get the car washed. You can stop by for those guys. Where's Blaine live — clear out on Westwood Avenue, isn't it? Who's this Morrow?" Dick's tone was kindly, soothing, agreeable, but final.

Sara Louise got up from her place; she turned her face from her father so that he could see only the line of her cheek and the morning-glory that had begun to droop. "It seems, to have asked for the car, to have spoken for it first, and a reasonable time ahead of time, means nothing, nothing! I don't know what he'll think of me. I suppose it means nothing to you, Dad, to see me have to humiliate myself, call a man and break an engagement at the last moment."

"Whata you mean — man?" Davie cried, unmoved. "You call him a man? That sap?"

"Well, here," Mr. Barton said. "Take the car! How much fun do you think I'd get out of using it, to go off and leave a feeling like this at home, behind me? I'll call Blaine; I'll call Morrow. I'll go out on the bus! My, when we got this car, when we got this new car, and Mother said to get five keys, if I'd ever dreamed it'd come to this, that this would be the way it would be, Sunday, I'd —"

"You mean, she's to have the car?" Dick asked. He got up from his chair. "Well, I like that! A little movie stuff, a little next-to-tears stuff, and —"

"Settle it between you!" Mr. Barton said. "Leave me out of it. I'm through. I'm gonna go read this paper, if I can get a chance, and then I'm going to phone those men, and

go wait for my bus." He slammed the paper down on the breakfast table and turned toward the kitchen, and then came back to pick up the paper.

"Aw, say," Davie said, with that sympathy the absolutely licked have for the licked, "Dad oughtn't to have to take the bus out there!"

"He doesn't have to," Sara Louise said. "I'll take him out, and pick up his friends on the way. I'll take him out as soon as I get my lunch together and get dressed. . . . What is there besides those pieces of chicken, Mother? I meant to tell you I'd need a lunch, and I forgot it."

"I'm going to wash the car now," Dick said, and went out the porch door, "and then I'm going to use it."

"There's potatoes," Mrs. Barton said. "I boiled them last night. You can make potato salad, they're still in their jackets."

"Oh, that takes too long, Mother," Sara Louise said. "Unless you'd have time to make it for me, would you? Dad and Dick have wasted all this time. And I have to dress yet. Mother, I wish you or Father would speak to Davie; he shouldn't say such things about people he doesn't know, and couldn't possibly appreciate."

"Suppose you speak to me!" Davie said. "Here I be!"

"Potato salad's easy, dear," Mrs. Barton said. "I'm sure you've seen me make it. You didn't say you'd pick him up any certain time, did you? . . . Davie, would you carry in the dishes and pile them in the sink? We're just going to leave them."

"O.K.," Davie said. "Him as gets left don't just get left, he gets left with the dishes."

Mrs. Barton followed him into the kitchen. "I'm sorry, Davie," she said. "I'm sorriest for you."

"You know," Davie said, "I think I'll make a run for it. I think, when he goes up to dress I'll just go out there and get in, and tear out. I got as much right as either of them."

Mrs. Barton passed her husband, where he sat in his favorite chair, the paper spread around him.

"Doggone it, Sally," he said. "I've a notion to take that car yet! It's not right they should have it every Sunday. I've a notion just to go out there, when he gets done washing it, and take it."

Mrs. Barton stopped and kissed him, very lightly, on the top of his left ear. "I'm going for a walk," she said, "a good, long walk. I thought of it last night — that, and some other things I'd like to do, and now I'll go dress."

"Well, I thought of things I'd like to do, too, and you see where it's got us," Mr. Barton said. He was still looking grimly at the news when Mrs. Barton came down, cool and pretty, in white linen dress, white shoes, hat, and gloves.

"You look nice, Sally," her husband remarked.

"You — wouldn't like to come with me, Joe?"

Mr. Barton smiled and shook his head. "Thanks, Sally," he said, "this is the one day I've got, you know, for a little golf."

Mrs. Barton turned in the door to smile back at him. "You have a good walk, Mamma," he said.

"I will; I'll have a lovely walk," Mrs. Barton said. When she smiled she put her head on one side, and her eyes crinkled in a way Mr. Barton remembered she used to do when she was a girl, and he was courting her. It was almost as though she had winked.

She went out through the kitchen, where her daughter was making plain bread-and-butter sandwiches. "Plain bread-and-butter sandwiches are really smart, don't you think, Mother?" she asked.

"Very," Mrs. Barton agreed. "Good-by, dear."

"Oh, are you going out, Mother? I wish you'd had time to help me with the potato salad. I'm not sure I know —"

"Hey, Sis," Dick called from out at the car, "will you

bring me out your key? Left mine upstairs. Gotta sweep out the car. Mamma's left it locked."

Mrs. Barton came out the kitchen way, and stood a moment on the step, framed in blue and purple morning-glories, to pull on her gloves.

"Say, where you going?" Dick asked.

"Why, for my walk," Mrs. Barton answered. "Didn't I tell you, Dick, I'm going for a walk?"

"Well, you sure look nice."

"Thank you, thank you, son," Mrs. Barton said.

"Say, you don't have your key with you? You left the door locked."

Mrs. Barton came out to the car. "I'm going to cut down the alley," she said, "and then just strike out; just go where fancy leads me."

She put her gloved finger tips on a fender and said, "Have a good day, Car!"

"Why, Mom," Dick said, and ran his wet fingers through his hair, "what are you doing, a Billie Burke?"

Mrs. Barton laughed, and her cheeks were uncommonly pink. "No," she said, "I'm doing a Sally Barton, going for a walk, a good, long walk. I doubt I'll be home until suppertime. I planned it all last night."

"Well, be good," Dick said.

"All right. You children be good," Mrs. Barton said, and went, really trippingly, down the narrow walk between the budding hollyhocks.

When she came to the end of the alley Mrs. Barton hesitated, and then turned left, walked briskly along the street, walked like a woman who may, very possibly, be followed, and who still does not wish to appear that she expects, quite possibly, to be followed. At the next corner she hesitated again, and then turned right and walked still more rapidly. After two blocks she stopped, and patted her hurry-heaving breast with a small gloved hand, and turned and threw a

quick look over her shoulder. She was not, as yet, followed. She turned right again, down a street where trees dropped low, and followed that street until she came to a streetcar line. Here she waited, well hid in the shelter of a small, open station, but it was warm in the station, too warm, for a person who had hurried so. Across the street was a park, a very little and shamefully overgrown park, only a block square. Mrs. Barton remembered that she used to take the children there to play when they were little. She had quite forgotten the place. Now, looking at it, she thought it had a really unusual and inviting charm. She liked the very raggedness of the park. She came out of the shelter and crossed over to it. On one of its paths she found that she was quite hidden from the street. There were flowers, half-heartedly tended, hit-or-miss flowers, along the sides of the path. And some of the flowers were quite unmistakably wild ones. She went on until she came to a bench, a worn and thinly painted bench, that she remembered, dimly, from other years. To come on the little park was like coming on a day out of life, lived and gone, a quiet and really lovely day.

She sat down on the bench, and opened her white pocket-book and took out a handkerchief. She took off her hat and laid it on her knees and wiped her forehead and throat.

Birds sang in the park trees. Beyond their singing she heard the steady, intermittent whine of cars shuttling past the little park on its far sides. She heard the bumping bounce they took as they crossed the streetcar tracks. She wondered just how many of them were fleeing from a home, from a family, with Sunday wishes slain, behind them. She thought of Joe, and wished she could tell him of that thought. She knew what his careful answer would be: "About ninety per cent," he'd say slowly. "I'd say just about ninety per cent, Sally."

A young woman came along the little path, wheeling a perambulator. Mrs. Barton smiled at her. She liked babies.

The woman stopped when she saw Mrs. Barton smile, and wheeled the perambulator back and forth with one hand.

"It's a lovely day," Mrs. Barton said, "isn't it?"

"Yes, it is," the young mother replied. "I thought baby ought to be out in it. We don't have a car."

"He's a fine boy!" Mrs. Barton added.

"Well, we think he's pretty fine," the mother said, and sat down beside Mrs. Barton. "I just thought I'd take him out awhile, and it's just a nice walk over here from our place. It's a nice day to walk."

"Yes, it is," Mrs. Barton said. "It's a lovely day. I planned last night, before I went to sleep, I'd have a walk today. You know how you plan things, sometimes perfectly wild things, when you're trying to go to sleep?"

The young mother nodded. The baby whimpered a little and squirmed against the strap that held him in.

"Here, here," Mrs. Barton said, "he's not to cry, he's not to cry on such a lovely day!"

She reached into the opened purse, on the bench beside her, took out a little ringed chain and dangled it, tinklingly, before the baby's reaching hands. From the ring hung five little keys — small, shining, identical ignition keys.

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DOROTHY THOMAS, the daughter of a country minister of Welsh descent, was born in Barnes, Kansas, and spent her early life moving from one parsonage to another in the small towns where her father preached. When she was seven, the family moved to a homestead claim near Battle Lake in Alberta, Canada. Her father died there, and her brothers, then mere boys, ran a sawmill for a year or two before they returned to the United States.

Miss Thomas lived for some time in Bethany, Nebraska, a small town which is now a part of the city of Lincoln. After attending high school for three years, she taught in a

country school. An ambitious person does not stop for obstacles, and the young teacher managed to clerk in stores in summer, and to pick up three years of college training as "leisure" time pursuits. In the meantime, the urge to write was growing, and she has been writing ever since. Most of her stories deal with home life in small towns, especially in the Middle West. A number of her stories have appeared in *Harper's Magazine*, and several of them have been published in book form under the title, *Home Place*. The story of that title won second prize in the O. Henry Memorial Award in 1935.

Learning His Job

“If you think I’m a crank, you ought to try working for that guy. He’ll kill you over three thousandths of an inch” When your teacher makes you copy a paper over, or your parents scold about some careless piece of work, you think they are too severe. But just wait until you get your first job! There is no place in industry for the careless or incompetent. Results, not excuses—that is what your boss will demand. Rick Brown thought that he never would learn; he was homesick and discouraged. Then out of confusion came a pattern, and Rick knew that he “belonged.” Margaret Weymouth Jackson in “South toward Home” tells an exciting story of a boy and his first job.

SOUTH TOWARD HOME

by MARGARET WEYMOUTH JACKSON

The letter from the Wood-Matson Company came in the afternoon mail, and by the time Rick got home from the plumbing shop everyone in the family had fingered and felt it, held it up to the light and shaken it.

He tore the letter open slowly. He looked at his mother. She had a bowl of applesauce in her hands, and she put it on the table and looked at Rick. Rick unfolded the letter and read it, and all of them waited, eyes fixed on his face; his father and mother, Jeanie and little Arthur, and grandmother.

With an instinctive feeling for what was proper, Rick handed the letter to his father and let him make the announcement. Mr. Brown put on his glasses and cleared his throat. He read aloud:

“In re your application for employment, please present this and report for work next Monday morning, at eight o’clock. Ask for Mr. Phillips.

Yours very truly,
R. H. DE VAULT”

There was a silence, so short as scarcely to deserve the name, yet it marked a pause in all their lives. Then his mother’s voice was quick and breathless, and pleased.

“I knew you’d get it!” she said. “I knew you would. But that’s next Monday — why, it’s only a couple of days. I’ll have to hurry to get your clothes all washed and ironed.”

"I could go up Sunday," said Rick, in a faraway voice. "There's a bus goes to the city Sunday afternoon."

"I could drive you up," his father offered.

But Rick shook his head. "I wouldn't want to trouble you," he said, and after a moment Mr. Brown nodded as calmly as though he were not disappointed.

Still in a daze, Rick looked around the room. He had never been away from home in his life. For the first time it hit him — that he was not sure he would know what to do or how to act out in the world. It was always pleasant at home, clean and cheerful. His family, his friends —

Heck, he thought sharply, he wasn't going to be homesick before he even got started. There were half a dozen Hilltown boys working in Capitol City in new defense industries. Johnny Crim was working on airplane motors, and the Dunker twins, and Philip Johnson. He could do anything that Johnny Crim could do.

"I'll ask Mrs. Crim where it was Johnny lived at first," his mother was saying. "It was a nice clean place, and not too expensive. That's before he went to live with friends."

The room was clean, but it was very small — Rick didn't know bedrooms came so small — and it cost five dollars a week. Rick thought this far too much. He put his things in his dresser. He had said good-by that morning to everyone at home. He felt very strange, here alone. He went downstairs to the telephone and called Johnny Crim, but Johnny was out.

Rick went out and walked around the neighborhood. He could see the blaze of uptown lights against the sky. The neighborhood had once been good, with fine homes, but they were now rooming houses, with dry cleaners and barbershops in the basement rooms. He found a hamburger place and ate three hamburgers. He walked the nine blocks to the gates of the Wood-Matson Company and home again and

went to bed. But he could not sleep. The silent, darkened buildings of Wood-Matson's behind the high iron fence haunted him. Could he make good? He had been a plumber's helper in a small town since he finished high school. It was something he would find out now — whether he was any good or not. It was an awful thing to contemplate.

He turned and twisted in the narrow, hard bed. He must remember what his father had told him — to keep his mouth shut and watch, and not ask questions if he could help it. And then he remembered Johnny. He had always beaten Johnny in schoolwork and in games. If Johnny could do it, he could. He relaxed and went to sleep.

Rick needed all that a small-town boy learns of self-control. He walked out of his rooming house wearing the dead pan of a Hoosier basketball player.

He ate another hamburger for breakfast and walked to work. His mind was as sensitive as a photographic plate to all the sights and sounds of the city — the streetcars and trucks and cars, the people — smart-looking office girls tripping along on high heels, with every hair in place ; and young men hurrying ; and older men, their overalls rolled into a bundle under one arm and a lunch bucket dangling from the other hand.

So he came to the entrance of Wood-Matson's and found that the big gates were locked, with an armed guard behind them. The real entrance was a small square brick building beside the big gate. Through this building the men were streaming. Rick entered. Most of the men proceeded past another guard to whom they showed badges. They went around a turnstile, punched the big clocks, and went on into a big square room which opened out into the grounds of the factory.

Rick paused at the counter running along the outer room and presented his letter. The young man who looked at it opened a gate.

"Come inside, Brown," he said. "Mr. De Vault will see you in a few moments."

He was told to sit down. There were several other newcomers. Rick was called. He went in and met Mr. De Vault, who was a big man, busy and hurried, but taking his time about things anyhow. Rick had met him before, the day he applied for the job, but Mr. De Vault showed no signs of remembering.

"Richard Brown, Hilltown?" the man said.

Rick nodded, solemn as a young owl.

"Mr. Phillips!" called Mr. De Vault. "This is your man! . . . Sign here, Brown."

Rick glanced around. The man staring at him was forty-odd, square and rugged, with a deeply lined and weathered face. He looked through Rick with cold eyes and Rick withstood the shock.

Phillips swore softly. "Why don't they send me something out of the baby buggy?" he demanded. "I want a man for this work."

"Look, tough guy," said De Vault; "take what you get and say thanks for it."

"I'm almost twenty years old," said Rick.

"Give him a ticket," said Phillips.

Rick was fingerprinted and a photograph quickly taken. A card was filled out for him. The number was 491 and he was given a badge with that number on it. He must wear the badge at work, and whenever challenged he must be able to produce his card, with his picture and fingerprints on it.

"When you go out tonight, I'll have your picture ready to attach," he was told. "Now, here's your clock number."

"Nuts," said Phillips. "I never saw anything so silly as all this fingerprinting. You don't need to hallmark him. Why, even in London, strangers know a Hoosier hick on sight."

"Unfortunately," said De Vault, "we aren't asking you. We're doing this the way the FBI tells us to."

"Come with me, Brown," Phillips said shortly, and Rick followed him.

They crossed a cindery, wind-swept yard. On either side, long buildings ranged back, brick and steel, roofed with glass.

Mr. Phillips pointed about. "That's the office building. This building to the right is new — assembly line, not in full operation yet. The one to the left is ours — the old assembly line. You're going to work for me. I'm the chief demonstrator, or test driver. I've got six men. One of them was just sent to South America on a service job and you'll take his place."

"Will I have to join a union?" asked Rick. He knew that Wood-Matson's was a closed shop, and this was one thought that had scared him.

"No," said Phillips; "we belong to the sales department."

Inside the building there was one huge room. Between the clean cement floor and the glass roof there were both order and commotion. They strode past a long series of stands with engines mounted on them. Beyond, in a line, he saw workmen busy about a variety of vehicles — trucks and tractors and armored cars and a station wagon or two. A big truck was jacked up off the floor and wheels lay beside it.

"Here we are," said Mr. Phillips. There was a desk against the brick wall. Beside it was a small Army tank. Mr. Phillips waved a hand at a rack with hangers for coats, and Rick put his windbreaker there, stuffing his cap into the pocket. Mr. Phillips leaned against his desk. He looked at Rick severely.

"Of course," he said, "there's probably not six boys your age in the country that couldn't take one of those little tanks and, with ten minutes of instruction, drive it, and with a couple of hours of instruction, drive it skillfully. But there's

more to this job than that." He paused, said slowly, "Now listen. I don't want to tell you all this twice. When we started making trucks for the Army, we took our farm tractor and redesigned it into that nifty little tank, and so now we're a war industry! The British have got some of our stuff in Africa now. And they have ordered more."

"Yes, sir," said Rick. His eyes were big and his face was pale, but he hoped Mr. Phillips wouldn't see how thrilled he was. Mr. Phillips glanced at him briefly and looked at the glass roof.

"There's two parts to this job," he said. "One's demonstrating to sell. People come here to try our stuff, and we have a sand pit, we have a hill, we have a dump in our own back yard, where the excavators piled the rubble for us. We take our cars and tanks out and demonstrate them for the sales force. We have to know exactly what they'll do and what they won't, and we have to give a good demonstration. Other times we run destruction tests. We have a course laid in the hills for that. You won't do anything like that for a while though. The boys that have been with me a long time can take a new job out and drive it so as to break one particular part—if it can be broken—and save the rest, as much as possible. That's a skilled job. Eventually, if you can do what I want, you'll become a demonstrator and a test driver. Everything that leaves here has to be driven first. If it's going to be rejected, we want to reject it ourselves, and not have the Army do it. But in order to do that job well, you have to be trained. You have to know what's inside of the thing, and why it does as it does, and how it ought to sound, and if it doesn't sound right, why. See that tank?"

Rick looked at the olive-drab tank. "Yes, sir," he said.

"That's being given a test run. It's been run a couple of thousand miles already, and the man that operates it has to know exactly what it does and how well it is doing it. But you don't need to bother about that. Right now you'll be

a grease monkey for the boys. You'll keep everything that's being tested or demonstrated cleaned and oiled and greased and filled with gas. Part of every day you'll work with Andrews on a conversion job, just to learn how we do it and what goes into it. When you have time you'll ride with the demonstrators, and maybe in a month or two you can start riding alone."

"Yes, sir," said Rick. His throat was dry. He swallowed.

Mr. Phillips introduced Rick to Andrews, who was working on a three-axed truck. Rick supposed the man knew what he was doing, but certainly no one else could guess.

Andrews nodded at Rick. "Stick around," he said.

Mr. Phillips went off. Rick stood there. An hour later he was still standing there, and no one had said another word to him. Rick waited. At last Andrews noticed him.

"Oh," said Andrews. "You still there?" He straightened. "Look," he said. "See what I'm doing?"

Rick looked. He shook his head. Andrews began to explain the work in hand. Rick squatted beside him and gave close attention.

"I suppose," said Andrews, "if you have to learn this, you have to learn it."

He handed Rick a wrench and told him to hold a bolt firmly. Rick was accustomed to waiting on older men — the Hilltown plumbers. But he learned very shortly that this was not the same. Andrews was not exactly a reasonable man, although he had such a calm voice. When Andrews told him to hold something, he meant it to be held absolutely rigid. Andrews was going to be very hard to please. He was patient at first and repeated his instructions, but by noon his voice was sharp with exasperation. Rick sweated at every pore. The noon whistle delivered him.

That afternoon Rick worked for Mr. Phillips. He met the others in their department — Mr. Phillips' assistant, Mr. Lamont — those two had been racing-car mechanics and

drivers in their youth. Lamont was a little younger than Phillips and twice as hard-boiled. The other three were all married men in their thirties. One was a fat driver called Porky, another a tall, very thin one called Slim, and the third a man who looked like a schoolteacher — Pete somebody. They all began at once to call him "Brownie," and Rick began to learn what a grease monkey was.

About four o'clock, Pete took a new tank out on the proving ground, and Rick went along. When he had ridden twenty-five miles beside Pete in the little tank, with no protection from the cold wind and with Pete's shouted observations ringing in his ears, Rick was sore all over. There wasn't an inch of him that didn't ache.

The days passed slowly and Rick's confusion increased. He was hardly aware that he had found a little boarding-house where he could eat better and cheaper than at the hamburger stand and where he got a packed lunch bucket every morning. He was sent here and there by Porky and Slim for tools that didn't exist, and told to do things that couldn't be done. Porky and Slim were incidental discomforts. The demands of Mr. Phillips and Andrews filled his days with a nightmare quality. No one, Rick was sure, could possibly please either man. He had all he could do not to tell his troubles to Pete, who seemed more sympathetic, but instinct forbade this. He had to please them.

Rick rode with Pete more than the others; rode while Pete took the station wagon straight up the hill, a steep slope about twenty-five miles from the plant where certain tests were made. He rode with Pete while trucks were taken through the sand pit. At night he lay awake and a kaleidoscope of impressions whirled through his mind — Andrews glaring because Rick had forgotten to make out an order on his requisition sheet; Pete, who waltzed the little tank through loose sand and walked it up concrete steps and off a wall and down, with a thump, onto the ground; the tank it-

self, like some angry, snarling, vicious varmint, twisting and turning and fighting its way with a loud, torturing buzz — Rick sat in the gunner's seat, and sometimes he imagined he had a machine gun there and that Pete was twisting and turning to give him bursts on a target with the gun — the workmen's room, where men who had been friends for years played cards and laughed together; the long, huge, clean assembly room and the busy competence of everyone in it.

One night Rick was filled with a great longing to talk to someone from home. He went downstairs and called Johnny Crim, but Johnny was out. Johnny was always out. Rick came back upstairs and lay across his bed, and he began to think about home, and about his father's deep, kind voice and his mother's quick ways, about Jeanie and little Arthur. And his friends, the boys and girls he had grown up with. Rick felt a tight, hot lump in his throat. It was all so strange. It was all so different. It was big and noisy. Wood-Matson's was not really a big plant and the big drive of work was not yet on. But to Rick the place seemed enormous. And every face remained strange.

He slept at last, tired and worn and blue.

Gosh, Rick thought, waking and turning in the narrow bed. What's wrong with me?

The next morning Rick was tired when he got to work, and he found Andrews unusually exacting. Rick tried hard, but he still did not really understand what they were doing. There was no pleasing Andrews. The man, Rick decided, his feelings raw from Andrews' comments — the man was simply a grouch. He was just a grinding old tyrant who was determined not to be pleased. Andrews finally laid down a tool in despair and looked at Rick. He began to swear.

“Can't you do anything right?” he asked. “I'll not put up with you! Phillips can train you himself! You've been here with me for days and you haven't learned a thing. You don't even know what we're doing.”

Rick swallowed a lump in his throat. "No," he said, "it's the truth, I don't."

"But I've told you—" Andrews closed his mouth, his cold eyes going beyond Rick.

Rick turned. A big man with some papers in his hand was standing there. Rick felt the impact of this man as though he had been punched. He looked at him, and the man looked straight back at Rick. He was a tall man, with thick hairy wrists and big feet and heavy shoulders a little stooped. His gray hair was thick and springy. Over the brightest blue eyes that Rick had ever seen, the brows were thick and tufted. The man had a big nose and a wide, strong mouth and chin. His face looked as though it had been carved out of hard wood with a blunt tool. But the blue eyes—

"You're new?" he asked. His voice was deliberate. Rick caught something—some vast patience.

"Yes, sir," said Rick.

"What's your name? Where are you from?"

"Rick—I mean Richard Brown, sir, from Hilltown."

"H'm'm. What are you doing, or going to do?"

"I'm to be one of Mr. Phillips' drivers, sir. But now I'm supposed to be learning from Mr. Andrews. So I'll know what goes into the trucks and later learn what goes to make the tanks. Afternoons I'm grease monkey for Mr. Phillips and the drivers, and I ride with Pete on whatever job he's driving."

"How old are you?"

"I'm nineteen. I'll be twenty in May, sir."

"Ever been away from home before?"

"No, sir."

"Well, don't get discouraged," said the other. "You'll be all right as soon as all of this begins to make some pattern. You'll get a pattern one of these days, and then you'll feel at home. You can't rush it. You just have to go along. You're lucky to get your training under Andrews. Andrews

is one good workman. Once you find out what he wants you to learn — How is he doing, Matt?"

"Fine, fine!" said Andrews heartily, and he had just been calling Rick names that sounded like Winston Churchill talking to Mussolini.

The man was off, down the assembly line, his long legs carrying him with a kind of stamping walk that was very fast.

Rick turned to Andrews. Rick felt a glow. "Who was he?" he asked.

"Don't you know?" asked Andrews, astonished.

"No. I never saw him before."

"It's Matson himself, the boss," said Andrews. "He just owns the place, that's all. And he knows every man that works here. He just invented and designed the work we're doing. He just had the idea for this and that. He pulled the old Wood plant out of the hole and through the depression. He's just the big shot."

"Well!" said Rick. "He's all right!"

"Listen," Andrews said, with deep respect in his voice, "if you think I'm a crank, you ought to try working for that guy. He'll kill you over three thousandths of an inch. He grinds his engineers and blueprint men into a fine powder and puts them in his breakfast coffee."

"But he seemed kind!" objected Rick. Why, the man had known he had never been away from home before!

Andrews stared at Rick. "Sure he's kind," he said. "He's a white man. Clear through! What's that got to do with what I was saying?"

To Rick, if the boss, the big shot, was kind, he would also be understanding about mistakes, sympathetic about things not done to the last split hair the way the blueprint said. But to Andrews, it was plain, Mr. Matson could be kind — a "white man" — and still a terrific crank. Rick didn't get it.

That afternoon Pete turned the light truck over to Rick to drive, bossing him every breath, and then they took out the little tank and Pete let him drive that.

"It's just like driving a horse," he said. "Pull back on this handle when you want to go this way, and pull back on the other handle when you want to go the other way."

Rick did exactly what Pete told him to do, but he felt that Pete was dissatisfied. Rick wondered dumbly why they didn't fire him. They all seemed to think that he had no sense or competence at all.

On Sunday afternoon Rick walked out to the edge of the city. He stood a long time on the berm while cars whipped past him. He just stood there, staring blindly toward the south — toward home. It eased him a little just to look that way, just to know that down there in the hills lay his native town, that there in the town was his father's house, and that his family was there. Love and laughter and kind words were there.

Toward the end of his third week at Wood-Matson's, young Rick Brown from Hilltown was so homesick he was dizzy with it. But he was ashamed to go home. He couldn't admit to the town that he couldn't live away from his family. He couldn't admit that the men were so exacting he couldn't please them, that he didn't yet understand his work. He was catching on a little. He had now driven every unit, but not alone, not for customers, only for Pete.

On Thursday, Phillips took him from Andrews and set him to work with Pete in giving a last glow and polish to the demonstration units.

"Phillips is up in the air today," said Pete. "You know, that South American commission is coming in this afternoon, and tomorrow morning the buyers for the Dutch East Indies will be in the shop. You know, Phillips was in Java a couple of years ago for the company. These Dutchmen are old friends of his and of the boss's."

"Phillips in Java?" asked Rick, astonished out of his lethargy.

"Sure," said Pete. "Those guys, Phillips and Lamont, have been all over the world for the company, demonstrating and teaching guys how to operate and service our units. Lamont was in Mexico last year and in Peru the year before. Of course, the rest of us haven't been around so much, but you'll see the world if you stick with this job. Mr. Matson will send Phillips anywhere."

"That old roughneck!" said Rick, and Pete glowered at him.

"Never mind that," said Pete. "Phillips hasn't any formal education maybe, but he's a demonstrator, and a wonderful one. You can learn enough from him to guarantee you a living forever. And mechanics the world around speak the same language. He doesn't need to know Spanish or Dutch; all he needs is a blueprint. They all know machine talk, from Java to Istanbul. And Phillips can talk that talk!"

Rick stood thinking. For the first time since he had begun work something stirred in him besides homesickness. But it was a very feeble stir. All afternoon they waited, but the South Americans did not come.

Phillips cursed softly "Tomorrow," he said, "they'll show up here, right in the middle of the Dutchmen's show.

... Look, Brownie, be sharp tomorrow, and look smart — clean shirt, shoes shined, everything neat! This head Dutchman is an old friend of the boss's. He gave us an order once, when we needed an order, that saved our lives. Matson himself will be right down here. May take the big shot out himself. So be on your toes."

Phillips was right. The two purchasing commissions arrived together. The New York office of the company from the Indies had sent their best men — tall, dignified, dark, and precise. A cool lot, with Mr. Matson himself as cool

as any of them. The South Americans, on the other hand, were volatile, quick, swarming over everything.

And down the long lane under the glass roof, between the engines and the trucks, came a girl accompanied by the sales manager's secretary. A spot of light touched her. Rick couldn't believe his eyes. She was neither Dutch nor South American, but she was all American girl, tall, golden-brown, blue-eyed, straight, and free. The telephone rang and Phillips picked it up, listened, and put it down. He spoke to Rick sharply. The girl came steadily toward them.

"Sales manager has sent out a young lady from Texas. She wants to try out the station wagon. She's buying for a big ranch. You'll have to take her anywhere she wants to go. Be smart now!"

The secretary departed. Rick took his place beside the station wagon. Mr. Phillips was talking to her. He brought her over to Rick.

"Rick, this is Miss Anderson," he said. . . . "And this is Rick Brown, who'll demonstrate for you, Miss Anderson. If you want to try the light truck later, we'll arrange for it."

The girl smiled at Rick. She held out a slender brown hand and Rick shook hands with her. She was nice. In fact, she was simply swell. He found himself grinning, and she grinned back. Rick opened the door of the station wagon and she got in. Rick looked out and saw the hot March sun — or it looked hot — shining down, and a question rose in his mind. Yesterday they had had the station wagon on the hill. He walked across to where Mr. Phillips and Mr. Matson were talking to the Dutchmen.

"Please," Rick said, "shall I take her up the hill, Mr. Phillips? The sun's on it hot today; the frost will be coming out of the ground; there'll be two inches of slime on the slope."

Mr. Matson turned on him. His hot blue eyes looked at Rick.

"Certainly take her up the hill," said Mr. Matson. "If that station wagon won't climb that hill under any conditions, I want to know it."

"Yes, sir," said Rick, and he got back in the wagon, sitting down on the leather seat beside the girl. He looked to right and left. There were all of Wood-Matson's units lined up, cleaned and polished and serviced, with exactly the right amount of air in every tire and the right kind and grade of fuel in every tank — the big Army tank and the little Army tank, the big truck and the little truck, the three-axle job, designed, with its huge tires, for traversing swamps; the armored car and the station wagon and the armored tractor for pulling artillery — the whole line shone and glittered, and something jumped in Rick and gave a big thump. It was his heart. He still felt Mr. Matson's blue eyes on him, hot, scorching. "If it won't do the hill I want to know it."

"Go ahead, Rick," called Phillips.

With a deep prayer, Rick put the station wagon into gear and pulled it out of the line. The big doors trundled open and he drove out between the buildings and turned the station wagon toward the sand pit.

Now he was absolutely on his own. The other units would be tried first on the proving ground back of the plant. The sand pit was at the edge of town, along the river. Here gravel had once been taken out of the river and washed, so that the sand left behind was washed sand; there was no loam in it. It lay, loose and treacherous, in hills and hummocks and little dunes, with wheel marks crossing and re-crossing it. The watchman opened the gate for Rick, and he drove the wagon in. He set it straight at a shoulder of sand which humped up before them. The girl uncrossed her legs and braced herself. The wagon crawled right over the shoulder and went slithering down the other side.

They were in the sand pit for half an hour. The girl

asked a few questions. Rick warmed to her. She just nodded her head.

He said at last, "Do you want to try it? See if you can stall it."

"All right," she said, and he hopped down and ran around to her side. She did try to stall the wagon; she drove it into deep loose sand, stopped, turned off the switch, started the engine again and began to pull out, and the wagon came.

Her eyes sparkled. She ran it along the edge of a hump, one side down, almost off balance. She was a driver! At last she nodded and slid back over into her own seat.

"Everything they claim is true, isn't it, Rick?" she said, smiling at him.

Rick blushed and nodded. "Yes, Miss Anderson," he said. "If you could see what goes into them — the care, the precision —" He felt proud.

They left the sand pit. They drove south to the hill. At the gate, Rick jumped down and opened the farm gate, and she drove through. He came back and got into the driver's seat. The hill loomed straight before them, occupied only by a few cows, which stared curiously.

"How steep is the grade?" asked Miss Anderson.

"It rises forty feet in every hundred forward," Rick told her. He decided he would be honest with her. "This is the first demonstration I've ever made alone," he said. "I'm going to take the car up the hill, but if I don't do a good job, it won't be the wagon's fault. You can see the sun is warm on this south slope, and the surface is soft; frost is coming out of the ground."

"I see," she said, and then she laughed. "Pooh," she said, "if you can't take it up, no one can. So go ahead, Mr. Rick!"

Rick put it into low gear and started. There was a road around the bottom of the hill — a rutted road. The station wagon moved and then struggled. It began to chatter, and

it went sideways along the road, but it could not jump out of the ruts. It did not move forward. The wheels spun. Rick stopped. He opened the door and looked back. He let it roll down across the road onto the grass. He started again, and this time he was really talking to it. His heart swelled, it wasn't going back on him, on her, on Mr. Matson. The wagon started forward. It crossed the road with a bump and started straight up the hill. Rick held it, and they walked right up the slimy slope and came to the top. Rick stopped. He looked at the girl, sheer triumph in his face. Her eyes were sparkling.

“Was that something?” Rick asked her.

She nodded. She laughed out loud. “It was certainly something!” she said.

There welled in Rick a great pride. “That,” he told her, “is what it's all about!” This was what the Army wanted, what the Marines wanted, what the British wanted in Africa, and the ranchers wanted in Texas; this was Wood-Matson's. This was that three thousandths of an inch for which Mr. Matson would commit murder. This was what Andrews was yelling about. This was what took the Australians into Bardia and why these units were in Java and Istanbul. They didn't need a road, bless them. All they needed was a bottom. American goods made by American cranks, made by Andrews and Matson, proved by Phillips. This was the language that could be spoken everywhere, in every tongue—the language of precision.

“I—” he said. “Mr. Matson told me when I got a pattern—and I've got one.”

“Yes,” she said, as though she knew all about it. They talked as they drove back to the plant. He had a pattern. Then he had shaken hands with her again, and she had gone her way—a swell girl, as perfect and reliable and flawless as a Wood-Matson product, he thought. He had a very simple elemental pattern now, and he suspected that there were

many' more complicated and intricate and beautiful patterns. But this one would do him now. For the first time a sense of adventure took hold of him.

The rest of the afternoon Rick waited on the others who were doing the demonstrating. And when everyone was gone, he started right in to get the units in shape for the next test. They had to be in perfect order for the work they were asked to do. He felt inspired, cranky about them. Everything was going to be right this time.

And there was the boy from the front office.

"Mr. Matson wants Rick Brown," he said.

Pete came and took the sponge and bucket from Rick, and Rick gave them to him reluctantly.

"Now don't get any water on that engine," he said crossly, and Pete stared after him. When Rick got into the big office, Mr. Matson was telephoning. He turned from the telephone and leaned back and looked at Rick.

"How are you getting along?" he asked.

"All right, sir," said Rick. "You said I'd get a pattern, and I did. I'm beginning to understand why our units will do what they'll do, why people want them."

"Andrews and Phillips are hard to please," said Mr. Matson. "Good men, both of them."

Rick grinned. "Mr. Andrews told me if I thought he was hard to please, I should try to do something to suit you," he said.

Mr. Matson laughed. "Well," he said, "you did something that pleased me this afternoon. The young lady has the say about an order for a considerable number of station wagons and some ton trucks for a group of co-operating ranchers. It's a nice order; even with others ordering by the thousands we like such an order. It's what we've lived on before and will live on again. You did a nice job, Rick. But tell me, are you still homesick?"

Rick was surprised.

"I was," he said, "until this afternoon. Now I'm all right."

"You think it was this pattern?"

"Yes, sir. I feel like I belong here now—with the company. I knew it when Miss Anderson tried to get the wagon stuck in the sand. I knew it when we climbed the hill. Mr. Andrews is right—about everything."

"Yes," said Matson. His blue eyes were turned on some distant point. They grew dreamy. He forgot Rick standing there. "Yes," he said, "it's something wonderful—that we can pick a boy up out of a little American town, and in three weeks he has the pattern."

Rick stood a moment, waiting. But Mr. Matson was far away. Rick withdrew quietly, with an instinct for what was correct. Quietly he went out and back to his work.

But there was a passion in his breast. The ties of home would never be broken, but they were slack now and left him free. He was at home wherever he was. He was learning the universal language of mechanics—the speech of precision. He was a young man who had touched a dream and had an idol and an ideal in his heart.

* * *

MARGARET WEYMOUTH JACKSON has not allowed any grass to grow under her feet, as the old saying goes. Certainly she is one of the busiest people in this busy world. She was born in Eureka Springs, Arkansas, and attended Lake View High School in Chicago. A little later, she married Charles Carter Jackson and launched three young Jacksons, Martha Florence, Elizabeth Ann, and Charles Weymouth, on the sea of life. That would be quite enough for most people, but Mrs. Jackson had time on her hands. First, she became assistant editor of *Farm Life*. Then she went to work as secretary to the dean at Wilson College in Chambersburg, Pennsylvania.

In 1917 and 1918, the United States being at war, Mrs. Jackson was engaged in munitions work, and in 1918, she added to her already busy schedule the work of women's editor of the magazine *Farm Life*. Next she became associate editor of *Better Farming* in Chicago. Meanwhile she lived for some time in Manitoba, wrote articles, serials, and short stories for *Good Housekeeping*, *Saturday Evening Post*, *Country Gentleman*, *Ladies' Home Journal*, and *Woman's Home Companion*, and just for good measure had several books published, among them: *Elizabeth's Tower*, *Sarah Thornton*, *Beggars Can Choose*, *First Fiddle*, and *Kindy's Crossing*.

Whenever you think you have too much to do, remember Mrs. Jackson.

Wings of the Army

Every woman who marries a man engaged in a hazardous occupation faces a serious problem. Can she bear to let him work at his job without worrying unduly? Can she keep from nagging him to be careful? Can she scrupulously refrain from interfering with his job or trying to make him find one less dangerous?

“Women aren’t made of iron,” flamed Martha.

“They’ve got to be,” snapped the Major, “if they’re going to mate with flyers”

“Singing Eagles,” by Marguerite Jacobs is a thrilling story of the gallant men who fly our army planes—and the wives who wait at home for them.

SINGING EAGLES

by MARGUERITE JACOBS

An unexpected key turned in the lock ; a light baritone echoed through the house :

“ A flyer’s wife a flyer’s joy should be,
Yo ho ! Yo ho !
Yo ho ! ”

“ Bruce ! ” Martha dropped brush and hairpins and ran to meet him.

They met at the top of the stairs. “ Took your breath, didn’t I ? ” he boasted.

“ What’s happened ? ” Her eyes shone. “ Is the course over ? How did you get here ? ” That very morning she had received a letter lamenting the amount of midnight oil an aviator must burn to keep abreast in the advanced aerodynamic classes of Boston Tech.

“ Flew, ” he answered her last question. “ I’m awfully mussy. Just landed. Didn’t wait to wash — peeled off my flying duds and hurried here.”

“ I’m all trembly, ” she confessed, “ you surprised me so. ” Arms about each other, they entered the bedroom, gay with mahogany and cretonnes. For the hundredth time, Martha was glad that when she married Lieutenant Bruce Fairing, Air Service, U. S. Army, she had spent the money left by her mother in making their home a place of charm ; once more she was repaid by her husband’s pleasure in the richness of color and comfort.

"Where's Petie-Girl?" He looked about for his red-haired baby daughter.

"The Dodo Bird has her out walking," Martha told him.

Then he was in a deep chair with her in his lap. "But you didn't tell me," she reminded him.

"Well, I was out at the Field yesterday when a chap named Quincey — 'Quince' we used to call him in France — landed in a pursuit ship. I tell you, Martha, after weeks with nothing but little training Jennies, that plane went straight to my head. When I found that Quince was staying on in Boston until next Tuesday, it dawned upon me here was my chance to stretch my legs in an honest-to-goodness flight. I could come home and get the plane back in time easily. So I pulled wires for the week end, left Boston at nine this morning, made one stop for gas — and here I am. Not bad time, eh?"

"Wonderful! But must you go back on Monday? Can't you stay?"

"Sunday. Can't you be grateful for small favors, young lady?"

"Not when you've been away for four months."

"Darling, you can't tell me how it is. In two more months, though, I'll be on your hands for good. I can scarcely wait to get back. Look at this." He drew from his pocket a red flexible leather notebook, showing her pages closely covered with mathematical equations, diagrams, and lecture notes. "I sure have boned. But" — eagerly — "there's more of the science of aviation to be learned in flying than in all the curves ever plotted."

"I must dress." She kissed him and sprang up. The charm had been broken. She had been his goal, but his greatest need, his craving, would be always, not for her, but for "stretching his legs in the air."

Nor was she altogether without understanding of that need. Three years ago, at twenty-two, when she had come

to Ohio to take a position at McGraw Field, she had collided with Bruce Fairing and fallen in love. The story of that whirlwind courtship and marriage had been a sensation of the Army Post. In those days she had thought herself possessed, too, of his strong obsession for flying. He had taken her up at every opportunity, using commercial airplanes when possible, or straining government regulations that they might fly together. In a dual-control training ship, he had taught her to take the stick, even letting her essay landings now and then. It had been thrilling happiness, absolutely devoid of fear. Then, before Petie-Girl's arrival, the doctor had ordered her out of the air and something had happened. She had not lost her nerve for herself. But fears for Bruce had begun to harass her. When she knew he was to fly, an unreasoning nervousness seized her. Hands icy and trembling she walked the floor, unable to control the horror of her thoughts. For a time she had fought in silence. Then waking, screaming in the night, from a vision in which she saw him crushed under a plane, she told him of her torture. He laughed and comforted her. That was all. But the premonitions had not been quite groundless, for, sent to ferry a new plane to a Northern flying field shortly after, he had been forced by engine breakage to land in a small clearing surrounded by woodland. The plane had struck a stump concealed by leaves, nosed over, and two days later rescue parties had found him dragging his way, badly battered, through the woods with a broken leg.

Nor was that the end. Petie-Girl had scarcely been acknowledged a bona fide inhabitant when, testing out the ability of a certain plane to cross the Caribbean Sea and Gulf of Mexico from Panama to Florida, he had been caught in a typhoon, blown from his course, and — while submarine chasers combed the sea for him — had arrived at his goal, paint gone from his plane, holes in the wings, and a mere stub of a propeller whirling in the hub — grimy, worn, but

dauntless. There had been months of bitter struggle between them after that. She had begged him to resign from the army. A brother had made possible greater opportunities for financial success than the army would ever hold. That he should refuse to secure his safety and usefulness for the happiness of their future and that of their child seemed to Martha beyond all reason. But he was obdurate, and in the end she had had to yield or reduce their days to petty haggling. Then, as now, the fact had been driven into her consciousness that, while he was the pivot about which her life revolved, in his life flying was fundamental. . . .

She glanced past her own face in the mirror, past the masses of red-gold hair, past the high color of flushed cheeks to the dark, slim laziness of the man contentedly watching her. His uniform was untidy from the long flight, he had opened his shirt at the throat, and his fingers had thoroughly ruffled the dark hair before clasping each other behind his head; but his eyes, brown like the smoked amber of a pipe-stem, kindled at her reflected smile, forcing up Martha's barometer of happiness.

"I must call up Tenny," he drawled.

"You needn't. He's coming to dinner tonight," Martha twinkled. "And Peg is coming, too. We're going to the officers' hop at the Field. Like to come along?"

"Rather!" He unbuttoned his puttees. "How are Tenny and Peg doing?"

"Oh, Tenny's more in love than ever. And I believe she's weakening. See what you think tonight."

"She doesn't know Ten, let alone love him," he fumed. "Wanting him to give up flying. Why, it's his life work. Old Tenny's an artist at it."

"No, she's right not to marry him if she couldn't bear it," defended Martha. "Remember, her cousin was killed —

she knows what it is. I admire her strength of will, for she does love him, dear. If I had it — ”

“ You don’t worry though, as you used to — do you, Martha ? ” he asked her then.

Martha lied bravely ; the mirror reflected her shining eyes.

Candles flickered warmly on the four faces about Martha’s table and on a bowl of flaming hothouse poppies Tenny had brought, which in their brilliance flaunted the flamboyance and brevity of all glory. Tenny’s was a sensitive face. Cheekbones too high, chin too long, skin weathered by all the winds of heaven, he was saved from homeliness by a certain grace of bearing, a charm of smile. He and Bruce, who had met in a German prison camp and escaped together, had been stationed after the war at the same flying field as test pilots. Tenny now smiled upon Peg, who seemed to recede to distances he could not reach. Bruce’s presence always had this effect upon her. He could not forgive her. For three years she had held Tenny’s rare devotion in the hollow of her hand, refusing to let it drift away or to close her hand upon it. Bruce wondered if nowadays it could be made a condition to love that men give up their work because it was dangerous.

The party had been in high feather at the surprise of having Bruce with them. Tenny had given Bruce the news of the Field tests on his new parachute that were being run, and Martha interrupted to laugh over a newspaper headline that had conferred upon Tenny the hoary title of “ Father of Safety Devices.” Tenny mentioned a new speed monoplane that had just been delivered ; Bruce’s eyes grew newly alert and he suggested that he and Tenny have a bit of combat practice the next afternoon.

Feeling Peg’s withdrawal of sympathy, Bruce was unable to resist a gay : “ Better come with us, Peggy ! ” And beauti-

fully poised, her voice soft but her blue eyes steely, Peg tossed off her ultimatum. "When that awful expression, 'They all come to it,' ceases to be a byword for flyers, perhaps I'll fly. Certainly not before."

"A hangover from a dead language," Bruce scoffed. "We don't all come to it. Behold Ten and yours truly, carrying on for years."

"It used to be true, perhaps," Tenny modified, "but you are safer in the air today than motoring on a crowded road. Statistics bear that out, I dare say. The casualties from auto smashups last year were tremendous."

"Statistics?" Peg contended. "But no woman believes in them. Does she, Martha?"

"Yes, I believe," Martha admitted. "But flyers' wives do better, Peg. They just don't think."

Exclamations over Martha's begging of the question were cut short by the doorbell, and to the noise of almost rowdy greeting, Bruce led in Lieutenant Dan Devereux, formerly of McGraw Field, just flown in from California. Half bashful cub, half clown, Dan held his own niche in their hearts.

"What's this I hear of your falling in love, Dan?" asked Martha, when he was seated. All shouted at the brick red that followed Martha's random shot, and Dan had to produce the story, ending with: "I don't know how it happened; but all of a sudden I had on her finger the piece of glass that springs the big surprise on a fellow's life-insurance policy."

"That's the way to fall in love," approved Bruce.

"Cornelia's people weren't very happy about me," said Dan. "Didn't like the idea of my flying — offered to back me if I'd go into some nice, safe business. But she was a trump. Stood right by me. We fellows know it takes no special grit to be a flyer. But to be a flyer's wife, taking us for the poor duds we are in the first place, sticking the

flying, standing by through our bonehead accidents — that takes grit."

"But it is you who come crashing down," said Peg, a little breathlessly. Only Martha sensed that Peg's back was almost to the wall.

"But that's what people don't seem to understand. There's nothing to a crack-up." A grave sweetness touched the rollicking voice. "It's a clean death. Better than Gregg's going by inches with T. B. or Grove's six days' agony with pneumonia. It's a little sooner for some of us, but what does that matter? It is you those years are long for — if you cared. Here's to the flyer's wife!" He lifted his glass to Martha. "The spunk of the spunkiest!"

"To the flyer's wife who keeps her husband in the air!" added Bruce.

"To the flyer's wife!" repeated Tenny, his eyes drawn from Martha to Peg.

A loud crow from above stairs turned each face upward.

"Cheers from the gallery," interpreted Bruce. "Dan, you must see my offspring."

"Let me get her." And Tenny was on the stairs. He returned with Petie-Girl, her surprised little head sticking out of a pink blanket. Her eyes, the burnt amber of her father's, were agape at the candles. Her hair, her mother's gift, flamed goldenly atop. From the security of Tenny's arms, she surveyed the group with shy smiles.

"Let me have her, Tenny!" Peg with her sweetest smile stretched her arms to the baby. A moment of hesitation, then Petie-Girl came into them, dragging Tenny with her by a finger. The talk returned to Dan, and Petie-Girl drooped her heavy head on Peg's breast and slept.

Finally with a little cry for the flown hours, Martha declared they'd have to hurry to make the dance at all. Peg declared she'd not have Petie-Girl waked. She'd carry her to bed herself. Martha asked Tenny to go with her to switch

on the lights. Bruce found Martha standing in the hall like a godmother in a fairy tale, her face alight. "Martha," he touched her hand, "you look adorable. Dan's love story carried me back. It's all new and magic, Martha — "

" Didn't you see? " she breathed. " Dan started it; Petie-Girl finished it. I told you Peg was weakening."

Steps on the stairs, in the room, and on Tenny's face an ineffable expression. "Martha — Bruce, old man, congratulate me." His quiet voice trembled. Within the circle of his arm they saw not the Peg, cool and haughty, they had seen all evening, but a flaming Peg, shining through her tears.

When they finally stepped out-of-doors, they lifted their faces instinctively to the great finger of the searchlight. Swinging sharply from the flying field, it pierced the jeweled darkness with a shaft of white.

" Night flying tonight, " observed Peg happily, and it was as if she announced herself a convert to a new creed.

Late the next afternoon Martha was surprised again by the sound of a key in the lock, and the muffled call of her name. Then Bruce was in the doorway, gray-white, stricken, trembling. " Tenny! " he cried hoarsely. " Tenny — " and would have collapsed but for her arms.

" Bruce, " she cried, " Bruce — listen to me! You were flying. Tenny crashed — did he? Bruce, he isn't — ? "

She was aware of the doorbell persistently ringing. The sound penetrated even Bruce's consciousness, recalled him to himself. Strength returned to his limbs, he straightened, then sank to the edge of the bed, rocking, fighting for control. Still the bell harassed, commanded the house.

" It's Harley, " he got out. " Go down and let him in. I'll — I'll be there in a minute."

In nervous haste she opened the door to the grizzled, anxious-faced Post surgeon. " Oh, Major Harley " — he took her hand — " Bruce has told me nothing."

"The two planes were acrobating," he told her, "beautiful flying, scores watching. Wings of Tenny's plane collapsed. Looked like paper fluttering out. Plane went into dive. Engine plunged six feet into ground. Tenny underneath. Bruce saw it all, landed immediately. Unfortunately, Tenny didn't wear his parachute."

"Why, he never flew without it," cried Martha. "He helped design it."

"I know. It seems he had sent it to be repacked. Ordered it back in time for this flight with Bruce. Didn't come. There'd been an unusual number of visitors, and reserves were all out. Bruce had started up, not knowing about the row. Tenny, saying he'd chance it once, hopped in his ship and followed Bruce. Life's queer. Many men will owe their lives to Tenny's 'chute, but when he needed it, it wasn't there."

"Only last night—" began Martha, and ended with a sob. "Oh, Peg—Peg!"

"They all come to it," Peg had said. That was the by-word about flyers.

She felt Bruce's arm about her shoulders. "Don't cry, Martha. Hurry to Peg, won't you? I'll get in touch with you somehow, later."

Again tears came—for Tenny, for herself, for Bruce. Could she go on forever secretly nagged by dread, nervous at the sudden ringing of the telephone, faint at an unexpected telegram? Perhaps if she begged him, now that flying had dealt him this bitter blow, he would listen. As she drove through town, newsboys were screaming Tenny's death.

Peg knew. Still and white, she was putting things into a suitcase open on the bed. "I'm going with Bruce to Tenny's mother," she said, and Martha helped her pack. Suddenly Peg's chilled hand clutched her. "Martha," she said desperately, "I could kill myself for the coward I've

been. Tenny and I have loved each other for two years. But I've listened to my family, who coddled me; I've listened to my scared yellow streak and to my perversity that begrudged his loyalty to flying. I could kill myself."

"Then you think you were wrong — that flying was worth his life?" Martha's voice was hard.

"I only know that if I could have these two years back I wouldn't care if both our bodies were broken into little bits. Bodies don't seem to matter, somehow. But I didn't know that until just now. And how can I remember last night without remembering all the months I've cheated us of? Oh, darling — "

Grief had made Peg illogical, Martha decided the next night alone. She had just returned from the station where Peg and Bruce with a gay, flag-draped box bearing the Air Service insignia had started for Vermont. Peg had forgotten that, had Tenny listened to her, he'd be alive at this moment.

That very evening Martha wrote to the brother who had long wanted Bruce in his business:

He goes straight from Vermont to Boston to finish his course. If you will go to him, Jimmy dear, he may listen. For he loved Tenny very dearly and is sick over his loss I feel it may be the psychological moment to suggest a change Before he left, I begged him to put in his resignation. He was half ready to, I think. If you succeed, I shall be grateful to you all my life.

Two weeks later she had an answer. Jimmy had gone to Boston, had made Bruce a good business proposition — and been refused. Bruce had seemed anything but discouraged about the flying game, had talked of various developments, and expressed his eagerness to get back to McGraw Field and real flying.

Martha was bitterly disappointed. She had failed so utterly in her conflict with Bruce. Yet if she did not care enough to oppose him for his own safety, her love was a

spineless thing. And if he did not care enough to make her happiness a consideration, he did not love her at all.

Just a week before the completion of the course, Martha wrote:

Dear Bruce.

What I say may hurt you. In a week you will be coming home. It was a time to which I had looked forward. Now I can see no happiness ahead for us. I'm going to Jane's for a bit. I want to think things out. The house will be in readiness for you. I suppose you will take your meals at the Officers' Club. The Dodo Bird will keep things clean. Your new uniform has come from the tailor's, and your tuxedo is hanging in the hall closet. I can't understand you, Bruce. I only know that I am wretched and you show no pity, that you are willing to make no smallest sacrifice to save me from intolerable distress. But since you can't see any but your own point of view, there's nothing more to be said

Martha

Martha had been with Jane a month when Bruce appeared. She was rocking Petie-Girl to sleep when, looking up, she saw him leaning in the doorway, very white, as if he were ill or under the stress of strong emotion. She knew he had come to take her home and, all at once, she was weary of the dissension between them.

"Martha . . ." Passionate, hurt pleading vibrated through his tones. He came into the room and stood looking down upon her in the lamplight. Suddenly, he dropped to his knees, burying his face in her shoulder, and she knew he was coming to her for comfort as surely as did this other child in her arms. Perhaps all flyers were children, the dreams and daring of youth somehow unshattered by hard realities.

Peace for six months. No accidents at the Field to set sensitive nerves quivering. Bruce singing in his bath, calling her name as his key came from the lock, wooing her by look and deed. A time of peace.

One brilliant morning, Martha turned from the study of a shop window to lift her eyes to the blue, where the long whine of a motor told her a plane was being "stunted." There, silvered in the sunshine, zooming, looping, diving — a singing eagle. Not many flyers had that sureness of technique, and she remembered Bruce had remarked at breakfast he was going to flight-test a new type of aileron. A surge of pride thrilled her.

"The eagle suffers little birds to sing," quoted Martha, her spirit soaring to the plane, more than a mile above. But this was a singing eagle, and she laughed inwardly at the picture Bruce had given her of singing at the top of his voice, on cross-country flights and, against the noise of engine and propeller blast, never hearing a sound. He would not be singing up there now. Such tests took all a flyer's powers of concentration. Pray God the new ailerons were all they had thought.

Suddenly, the blood chilled at her heart, for a dive was lasting too long; and with a speed which had become terrifying, the plane was shooting, nose down, for the earth. For an agonized instant, she sensed the pilot's — no, Bruce's — impotent struggle with the controls. For age-long seconds, the helplessness of it stabbed and tortured her. Then a small black thing, no bigger than an ink bottle, leaped away from the plane and spun downward. About to cover the sickening descent from her eyes, she saw flutter out a long white streamer, which in another instant had opened into a parachute that slowed the downward rush of the small object. The heavy plane had plunged on behind a curtain of trees and houses.

Around her, people had stopped; cries witnessed calamity. Above, where the parachute was gliding earthward, the dangling ink bottle was assuming the lines of a man. Scarcely conscious of action, Martha pushed her way to the curb and

with shaking hands headed her car toward the edge of town to which the parachute was drifting.

When, after twelve minutes, she had reached the suburban district, she needed no instructions. Doors stood open, houses deserted. On foot, by motor and bicycle, crowds hurried in one direction. "Parachute landed in Brown's grape arbor!" a boy shouted. Farther down the street she saw the Field ambulance. Held up by the number of cars, she abandoned hers and ran with the crowd.

It had been Bruce! A stretcher stood in the middle of a lawn and upon it they had lifted him. Hands clasped under his head, eyes brilliant, he lay, while about him, half hysterical with joy, the memory of Tenny still upon them, hovered officers and men from the Field — familiar and unfamiliar faces, strangers, reporters, all laughing, talking. There, across the lawn was the smashed grape arbor, the mammoth folds of parachute silk caught upon it lifting in the breeze.

Martha, at the edge of the crowd, was paralyzed in will and emotion. He was safe! She heard Major Harley's commanding tones ordering a way for the stretcher-bearers. "Stand back there — stand back!" Then, as the stretcher was lifted to the ambulance, a sharp "Be careful of that leg!" while officers sprang forward to make the lifting easier. Still she stood, weak and helpless, watching the ambulance swallow him up and hurry, clanging, down the street. As she turned, she heard her name. Before her stood a young lieutenant whom Bruce had brought to dinner one night, eyeing her with puzzled pity. He found her car, put her into it, and drove to the Post hospital.

Major Harley was with Bruce, the attendant told them. It seemed a long time before he appeared from an inner room. "We've been trying to get you, Martha," he said curtly. "Where have you been?"

"Bruce — " gasped Martha.

"Has been asking for you. But you can't go in like that. Pull yourself together"—impatiently. "This is no funeral, you know. Bruce saved himself. Came down in a parachute. It was beautiful."

"Yes, I saw the whole thing," said Martha.

"Now, see here, Martha, Bruce is all right. But he's got a badly twisted leg from that grape arbor, and his nerves may be somewhat shot when the reaction sets in. He hasn't been up to par lately and I won't have an hysterical woman upsetting him."

"Women aren't made of iron," flamed Martha.

"They've got to be," snapped the Major, "if they're going to mate with flyers."

An orderly opened the door. "The lieutenant is asking for Mrs. Fairing."

Within, through the half dark, Martha's eyes flew to the cot in the corner. "Hello, there!" She heard her voice achieve lightness. "How do you feel?"

There was an outflung hand. "Drowsy," came Bruce's answer, calmly, and though she could not see his eyes, she knew the unconquerable light of them. "Harley has doped me to make me sleep. But I wanted to see you first."

She kissed him gently, suppressing the desperate things thundering from her heart. "I'm here now, old dear. So you can drop right off."

"Martha"—his clasp hurt her hand—"Tenny saved me."

"You mean because you wore his parachute?"

"No—he was with me. He got me over the side. I almost heard him speak. Queer—and it's so long between the time you know you can't control the plane and—she crashes."

"But you didn't crash, dear."

"No. I was thinking of old Ten—no parachute. It was pie for me."

Pie! At five thousand feet with but a piece of silk between him and extinction.

"Were you badly frightened, Martha?"

"I thought you'd be killed like Tenny," she wanted to say.

"Not frightened — no, dear." But no effort could keep her voice from choking off in a convulsive shudder.

He had jerked aside the drawn window shade beside the cot, setting her face in a flare of light. Beneath the searching of his gaze she tried to smile, but the horror that hour had unconsciously stamped upon her could not be shammed away. She saw astonished fear dawn in his own face.

"Martha, what's happened to you?"

"Nothing."

"That's not true — you are ill" — tersely.

"It is true, now that you are safe."

"Nothing wrong with Petie?"

"Nothing — I give you my word. Lie down and rest." He let the shade fall into place, restoring the grateful dimness, but his eyes focused strangely straight ahead.

"That sickness in your eyes — your face — is that for me, Martha?"

"You know how anxious I get, Bruce."

"I didn't know that it was this — that it broke you so — I never saw it before."

"It's nothing, really. We'll both forget it." But her hand in his clasp, her whole body was trembling violently.

"Those other times — always like this?" he insisted.

"Please, Bruce — please" — pantingly.

"Martha" — slowly — "I see now what you meant in your letters. Dan had it — that night. Only I'm not worth such caring, Martha."

She tried to speak, but her breath was choking her. He touched her shoulder, then suddenly braced her trembling within his arms. "A man doesn't go his way over a woman's

body," he told himself. Then, "I can't ask you to go through any more for me, Martha."

"But you can—oh, Bruce, you can!" Defeated in her effort for control, she broke into wild sobbing.

"I give in. We'll write Jim—send my resignation to the army."

"No, Bruce—no!"

"Yes, Martha—yes." A heaviness in his voice, a laxity in his arms struck her. His eyes when she looked up were strange and sleep-heavy. "It's the dope," he murmured, his breathing growing deeper. "You'll stay?" he asked, but before she could assure him, his eyes had closed.

Martha sat, scarcely stirring, the heavy helpless hand within her own. He was safe—through with flying. He would not "come to it." She was glad of the agony of this day if it had accomplished that. But where was the anticipated feeling of relief, of freedom, of triumph? Was she still too bruised with near-tragedy to sense anything but the ache of it? Or was it that, in taking this step, they were turning their backs upon the essence of their romance, of their high dreams, of their youth? Would these things shrink away in a more settled assurance of safety?

The torn ligaments and the nervous reaction had been pretty bad. Bruce had wakened from his narcotic-induced sleep sick in body and mind. For a time all rest was broken by strange dreams in which he fell helplessly, while his parachute failed to open, or lay pinned in wreckage about to burst into flames. Often he struggled and cried out, and Martha hurrying to him, bathed the cold perspiration from his face. Even after the racking leg pain was gone, the sick nerves failed to recover properly, and Harley had ordered an indefinite leave of absence, preferably to some mountain resort where airplanes would be non-existent and "aviation"

an unused word. Jane, Martha's favorite sister-in-law, would take Petie-Girl.

The morning of the hegira, Martha followed Major Harley to the door. Since the accident, a few days after which Bruce's resignation had gone in, there had been a strange reticence between them. Martha had carried out orders, but opportunities for unnecessary talk had been evaded. In the last few days, however, the surgeon had caught a harassed look in the gray eyes and the well-set flamboyant head seemed oddly dispirited. Well, she was rather young for the large doses life had been feeding her.

"Pretty cross, isn't he?" he remarked as she held him, tacitly lingering in the doorway.

"Is it a sign of getting better?" she pleaded.

"Sometimes — if the patient seems in good spirits otherwise."

"I don't think Bruce does, especially." She didn't like saying it.

"Broody?"

"For hours, sometimes. I've never known him like that before."

"We men don't bear confinement very well," he comforted.

"It isn't just confinement. When he had his broken leg, there were smoke and poker and men in his room all day long."

"They still come, don't they?"

"But Bruce won't play cards. They don't talk flying. It's different."

"Well, this accident coming on top of Tenny's death, your leaving him — oh, I guessed that — the worry over giving up flying — you'll have to give him time."

"You say kind things, but in your heart you think I have been wrong." The trouble in her face deepened. "I want you to know, though, Major Harley, that I didn't take ad-

vantage of Bruce's decision that day at the hospital. It was only after I learned what a horror flying had become to him from those frightful dreams that I sent in his resignation."

"I suppose, Martha, it would seem extremely strange to you were I to tell you that those visions of Bruce's were the natural result in his condition of his decision to stop flying?" asked the doctor.

"How could they be?" She became paler.

"Because the nervous system is a most contradictory factor. Bruce has always faced such dangers, but the joys of flying have meant so much more to him that he easily relegated them to his subconscious thoughts. In his illness, forcing all thoughts of flying from his conscious mind, he unbarred the gates of the subconscious, spilling out the terrors. Quite simple from a doctor's viewpoint, you see?"

"I had hoped—"

"That he was cured of aviation? What do you *think*, Martha?" The keen eyes bored through her. Martha looked past them unseeing into the brilliant sunshine which, already jaded with spring, was trying to coax forth summer. "All my thoughts come back to the big fact that I have saved his life," she said fervently. "Some day, I hope Bruce will see that and be glad of it, too."

The doctor held out his hand. "Good-by, Martha. I hope you and Bruce find the happiness that lies just over the hill."

That afternoon they were off to a mountain farm. Through sunny hours of warming days they sat outdoors, Bruce with his leg propped on a chair, while Martha read to him or left him to lounge or smoke. The air held the tinge of high places, the wide vista of valleys and hills, a healing peace and beauty. Only the mail reminded them of their severed association. Martha fingered it with anxiety each day, letters from flyers scattered over the world, congratulating him upon his escape, commenting upon his intended resignation.

None blamed him. Flyers knew their game: how much they staked, how little its future held for them. They had no criticism for one who acted upon that knowledge. But the resignation had evidently become balled up in Washington.

They never discussed these letters, nor flying, in fact, after a day that Martha had surprised upon him a look of such eagerness. "Martha, I know how to take the bug out of that aileron that failed me." The next instant had found them staring at each other, Martha with fright in her eyes, Bruce a bit sheepish, a bit sullen, the fine ardor gone. It was the one time since the accident that the old Bruce had appeared.

Now and then, at night, that look would come to haunt her, while a worrying inner voice questioned her right to play God in Bruce's life. The picture of the plane as she had seen it falling that morning, however, was usually enough to strengthen her resolves, shutting thought to further argument.

Gradually, Bruce discarded crutches for a cane. The hollows in cheekbones became less concave, the gray pallor changed to tan. Restlessness flicked him into activity. There was a stream near by, with rapids and fish in a deep pool below which Bruce explored with a rod.

Finding a rent in the old leather flying jacket he usually wore on such expeditions, Martha prepared to mend it and, feeling a foreign material between lining and coat, drew forth the red flexible leather notebook he had shown her the day he had flown in from Boston. She flicked the pages and was about to lay it aside when there leaped from the jumble of lecture notes and mathematics, in Bruce's sprawl, the words, "Tenny, old man, where are you?" She turned more pages, unintelligible with technicalities. Suddenly she caught her name. "Can't you see, Martha," he had written, harassed in the midst of work, "that if I give up flying for you, you leave me nothing — not even yourself?"

The coat slipped heedlessly to the floor. "If I give up flying, you leave me nothing—not even yourself." Surely that day in the hospital, when he had voluntarily decided, that meaning had not been in his mind. "You leave me nothing—not even yourself." Blindly she knew, past all doubt, that Bruce would not change. She rose, spilling the sewing things about her, pacing the small room.

Pictures of that old Bruce crowded her mind, buoyant, waving to her, swinging into his plane; of Bruce and Tenny roaring with laughter. Peg's face flashed before her, "Bodies don't seem to count—" She knew now what Peg had meant — Peg, to whom the revelation had come too late.

She stooped to pick up and replace the leather notebook in the coat. Then, urged by the need of Bruce, she ran from the room, down the hill toward the ledges.

There was a spot where one could glimpse the rocks through the trees. He was there, his cane beside him, looking oddly small and lonely in the vast setting of peaks and chasm, while an eagle from the crags above banked and circled freely out in the sky. Again Martha hurried down the steep grade, until, reaching the jutting rock he had made his own, she settled down softly, not too near him.

"Hello," he greeted her, not looking up from the pipe he was filling. Martha drank him in eagerly, seeking the old Bruce she had almost found up there in the little bedroom.

"Bruce," she said, after a silence, "let's go home."

"Very well"—indifferently. "Only what's the sudden idea?"

"I'm dying to see Petie-Girl." The suppressed homesickness for her baby suddenly overwhelmed her.

"Poor little tyke, I guess she does wonder if she has parents. When do we go?"

"Tomorrow?"

"O. K. with me."

Silence again. The sun dropped behind a peak and the

great valley began to be filled with shadows. She knew he was thinking of the time beyond tomorrow. "Queer about the resignation," he commented finally.

"Yes — queer!" she assented. Then she heard her voice, strangely pitched, saying, "It mustn't come, Bruce."

"Don't worry. It will," he laughed shortly.

"Can't we stop it?" tensely.

He jerked to a more erect posture. "What on earth are you driving at, Martha?"

"Oh," moaned Martha, bowing her face to her updrawn knees, "how can I say it?"

"You mean you have changed your mind" — he was staring at her now, frankly puzzled — "about my flying?"

"Yes — oh, yes."

"Then don't bother to say it" — coldly. "I can't switch my decisions about like a cat's tail. That's settled forever."

Martha lifted her head, high wings of color mounting in her white face. "Do you mean, Bruce, that you don't long for the feel of the stick in your palm and the rudder under your shoes, for the roar of the engine wide open, for the long lift and banking with the earth swaying beneath? Do you mean that, after all these weeks of struggle, your mind in its first idle moments does not swing back to the problems of flight, that the ache of giving it up is not the hardest thing you have ever endured? Have your dreams changed, Bruce? For ten years now you have been face to face with its dangers, its tragedies, yet does not your greatest sense of exultation lie in the knowledge that you can fly?"

Martha looked away to the flaming afterglow that had rolled up from the fallen sun. "I have been wrong," she said, and bowed her head once more to her knees. "It is too big a thing I was fighting — civilization itself. But only today did I realize that I was fighting something infinitely bigger to me — your love for me, our love for each other."

"Why hark back over all this? It's settled, I tell you."

"Because we must do something about that resignation," said Martha more calmly. "That day at the hospital, you made a decision for my sake. We thought it final. It wasn't, but this one is. You are going back to flying, Bruce, and I swear to you that never again will I try to get you to give it up — never again. I'm afraid I'm glad — deep down — glad that I can't make anything but an aviator out of you."

He started to his feet, forgetting his cane. Martha ran to him, lifting her face, tear-stained but touched with triumph.

"I can't understand." He was white.

Martha's eyes were luminous, tender. Never would he learn of the discovery of the red leather notebook. "Don't try to understand. Just believe me, dear, and help me to be fearless as I used to be — to be a true flyer's wife."

"Martha!" — brokenly. "So you're with me again, old girl?"

Martha needed no words to answer.

"You will try to stop the resignation?" she persisted, after a moment.

"I'll go to Washington tomorrow" — gently. "It may not have reached the Chief's office. It will be a funny spectacle — like a dog after its own tail. But — I can do anything now."

They laughed and were again in each other's arms, but a crackling of twigs, a swishing of leaves warned them apart. Their farmer emerged breathlessly from the woods. "Flyin' machine jes' landed beyond the hill there," he panted. "Turned upside down. Young fellow dragged out, hardly scratched. Jes' wanted to tell you your supper's set out in the kitchen. We're goin' over to see it."

Aviation had come to the backwoods mountain town.

"Did you hear the name of the pilot?" asked Bruce excitedly.

"What? Oh, no, sir." He hastened up the hill, then re-

turned, and they saw in his hand an envelope, a thin, official-looking, blue-white envelope, bearing a War Department frank. "Most forgot to give you this. It come in the mail," he announced.

Gone also was the moment of elation, as, stunned, they looked upon it.

"It appears that a trip to Washington will be unnecessary," he said. "Martha, I'm safely out of the army."

She turned from him, shrinking.

Lifelessly he mutilated the envelope, tearing it away from the contents.

"It isn't the usual form," he remarked dully. "Why, it's a letter—a letter from the General. Martha!" His voice mounted in its high surprise. "Martha! Listen! —am writing to learn if you won't reconsider your decision and remain one of us . . . your marked ability as a pilot, knowledge of the science of aeronautics, and long experience render your services especially valuable at the present stage of progress . . . great amount of work to be done . . . special mission want to discuss with you as soon as health permits return to work." Martha! From the old man! Martha—Martha—"

But Martha was there, close to his hammering heart, eagerly gleaning the words.

The mad surge of color had died from the sky, but for them the sky and the woods were still glowing as they took their way up the hill to the lighted farmhouse.



It is probable that many an American girl received her first inspiration to be a writer from Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women*. At any rate, that is what happened to Marguerite Jacobs. Long-legged Jo March, reading, writing, and munching apples in the attic, fired her imagination and she

began to write plays for the neighborhood children, such as Jo wrote for herself and her sisters. Miss Jacobs was born into a sports-loving family, and she enjoyed tennis and golf, but she would rather write than win silver cups any day.

After Miss Jacobs was graduated from the University of Cincinnati, she was sent to a military aviation field on a publicity assignment. Her first sight of an airplane landing gave her a thrill that she never forgot. She became intensely interested in flyers and flying, both in this country and in Europe, and soon began to write stories about aviation. Her book, *Knights of the Wing*, has been very popular, and the story, "Singing Eagles," was awarded the O. Henry Memorial Prize in the year in which it appeared.

New England Granite

From the day the Pilgrims landed on a rockbound coast, the name New Englander has suggested certain traits of character. It connotes a restraint of feeling which more impulsive persons may mistake for absence of feeling; a reserve carried almost to the point of coldness, a quiet dignity which to a breezy Westerner seems like "stand-offishness." But those who come to know New England people well find that beneath the flint is fire. Dorothy Canfield suggests the theme of her story in the title — "Flint and Fire."

FLINT AND FIRE

by DOROTHY CANFIELD

My husband's cousin had come up from the city, slightly more fagged and sardonic than usual, and as he stretched himself out in the big porch chair he was even more caustic than was his wont about the bareness and emotional sterility of the lives of our country people.

"Perhaps they had, a couple of centuries ago, when the Puritan hallucination was still strong, a certain fierce savor of religious intolerance; but now that that has died out, and no material prosperity has come to let them share in the larger life of their country, there is a flatness, a mean absence of warmth or color, a deadness to all emotions but the pettiest sorts — "

I pushed the pitcher nearer him, clinking the ice invitingly, and directed his attention to our iris bed as a more cheerful object of contemplation than the degeneracy of the inhabitants of Vermont. The flowers burned on their tall stalks like yellow tongues of flame. The strong, swordlike green leaves thrust themselves boldly up into the spring air like a challenge. The plants vibrated with vigorous life.

In the field beyond them, as vigorous as they, strode Adoniram Purdon behind his team, the reins tied together behind his muscular neck, his hands grasping the plow with the masterful sureness of the successful practitioner of an art. The hot, sweet spring sunshine shone down on 'Niram's head with its thick crest of brown hair, the ineffable odor

of newly turned earth steamed up about him like incense, the mountain stream beyond him leaped and shouted. His powerful body answered every call made on it with the precision of a splendid machine. But there was no elation in the grimly set face as 'Niram wrenched the plow around a big stone, or as, in a more favorable furrow, the gleaming share sped steadily along before the plowman, turning over a long, unbroken brown ribbon of earth.

My cousin-in-law waved a nervous hand toward the sternly silent figure as it stepped doggedly behind the straining team, the head bent forward, the eyes fixed on the horses' heels.

"There!" he said. "There is an example of what I mean. Is there another race on earth which could produce a man in such a situation who would not, on such a day sing, or whistle, or at least hold up his head and look at all the earthly glories about him?"

I was silent, but not for lack of material for speech. 'Niram's reasons for austere self-control were not such as I cared to discuss with a man of my cousin's mental attitude. As we sat looking at him the noon whistle from the village blew and the wise old horses stopped in the middle of a furrow. 'Niram unharnessed them, led them to the shade of a tree, and put on their nose bags. Then he turned and came toward the house.

"Don't I seem to remember," murmured my cousin under his breath, "that, even though he is a New Englander, he has been known to make up errands to your kitchen to see your pretty Ev'leen Ann?"

I looked at him hard; but he was only gazing down, rather cross-eyed, on his grizzled mustache, with an obvious petulant interest in the increase of white hairs in it. Evidently his had been but a chance shot. 'Niram stepped up on the grass at the edge of the porch. He was so tall that he overtopped the railing easily, and, reaching a long arm over to where I sat, he handed me a small package done up in yel-

lowish tissue paper. Without hat-raisings, or good-mornings or any other of the greetings usual in a more effusive civilization, he explained briefly:

"My stepmother wanted I should give you this. She said to thank you for the grape juice." As he spoke he looked at me gravely out of deep-set blue eyes, and when he had delivered his message he held his peace.

I expressed myself with the babbling volubility of one whose manners have been corrupted by occasional sojourns in the city. "Oh, 'Niram!" I cried protestingly, as I opened the package and took out an exquisitely wrought old-fashioned collar. "Oh, 'Niram! How *could* your stepmother give such a thing away? Why, it must be one of her precious old relics. I don't *want* her to give me something every time I do some little thing for her. Can't a neighbor send her in a few bottles of grape juice without her thinking she must pay it back somehow? It's not kind of her. She has never yet let me do the least thing for her without repaying me with something that is worth ever so much more than my trifling services."

When I had finished my prattling, 'Niram repeated, with an accent of finality, "She wanted I should give it to you."

The older man stirred in his chair. Without looking at him I knew that his gaze on the young rustic was quizzical and that he was recording on the tablets of his merciless memory the ungraceful abruptness of the other's action and manner.

"How is your stepmother feeling today, 'Niram?" I asked.

"Worse."

'Niram came to a full stop with the word. My cousin covered his satirical mouth with his hand.

"Can't the doctor do anything to relieve her?" I asked.

'Niram moved at last from his Indianlike immobility. He looked up under the brim of his felt hat at the sky line of the

mountain, shimmering iridescent above us. "He says maybe 'lectricity would help her some. I'm goin' to git her the batteries and things soon's I git the rubber bandages paid for."

There was a long silence. My cousin stood up, yawning, and sauntered away toward the door. "Shall I send Ev'leen Ann out to get the pitcher and glasses?" he asked in an accent which he evidently thought very humorously significant.

The strong face under the felt hat turned white, the jaw muscles set hard, but for all this show of strength there was an instant when the man's eyes looked out with the sick, helpless revelation of pain they might have had when 'Niram was a little boy of ten, a third of his present age, and less than half his present stature. Occasionally it is horrifying to see how a chance shot rings the bell.

"No, no! Never mind!" I said hastily. "I'll take the tray in when I go."

Without salutation or farewell 'Niram Purdon turned and went back to his work.

The porch was an enchanted place, walled around with starlit darkness, visited by wisps of breezes shaking down from their wings the breath of lilac and syringa, flowering wild grapes, and plowed fields. Down at the foot of our sloping lawn the little river, still swollen by the melted snow from the mountains, plunged between its stony banks and shouted its brave song to the stars.

We three middle-aged people — Paul, his cousin, and I — had disposed our uncomely, useful, middle-aged bodies in the big wicker chairs and left them there while our young souls wandered abroad in the sweet, dark glory of the night. At least Paul and I were doing this, as we sat, hand in hand, thinking of a May night twenty years before. One never knows what Horace is thinking of, but apparently he was not in his usual captious vein, for after a long pause he remarked, "It is a night almost indecorously inviting to the making of love."

My answer seemed grotesquely out of key with this, but its sequence was clear in my mind. I got up, saying: "Oh, that reminds me — I must go and see Ev'leen Ann. I'd forgotten to plan tomorrow's dinner."

"Oh, everlastingly Ev'leen Ann!" mocked Horace from his corner. "Can't you think of anything but Ev'leen Ann and her affairs?"

I felt my way through the darkness of the house, toward the kitchen, both doors of which were tightly closed. When I stepped into the hot, close room, smelling of food and fire, I saw Ev'leen Ann sitting on the straight kitchen chair, the yellow light of the bracket lamp bearing down on her heavy braids and bringing out the exquisitely subtle modeling of her smooth young face. Her hands were folded in her lap. She was staring at the blank wall, and the expression of her eyes so startled and shocked me that I stopped short and would have retreated if it had not been too late. She had seen me, roused herself, and said quietly, as though continuing a conversation interrupted the moment before:

"I had been thinking that there was enough left of the roast to make hash-balls for dinner"—"hash-balls" is Ev'leen Ann's decent Anglo-Saxon name for croquettes—"and maybe you'd like a rhubarb pie."

I knew well enough she had been thinking of no such thing, but I could as easily have slapped a reigning sovereign on the back as broken in on the regal reserve of Ev'leen Ann in her clean gingham.

"Well, yes, Ev'leen Ann," I answered in her own tone of reasonable consideration of the matter; "that would be nice, and your piecrust is so flaky that even Mr. Horace will have to be pleased."

"Mr. Horace" is our title for the sardonic cousin whose carping ways are half a joke, and half a menace in our family.

Ev'leen Ann could not manage the smile which should have greeted this sally. She looked down soberly at the

white-pine top of the kitchen table and said, "I guess there is enough sparrowgrass up in the garden for a mess, too, if you'd like that."

"That would taste very good," I agreed, my heart aching for her.

"And creamed potatoes," she finished bravely, thrusting my unspoken pity from her.

"You know I like creamed potatoes better than any other kind," I concurred.

There was a silence. It seemed inhuman to go and leave the stricken young thing to fight her trouble alone in the ugly prison, her work place, though I thought I could guess why Ev'leen Ann had shut the doors so tightly. I hung near her, searching my head for something to say, but she helped me by no casual remark. 'Niram is not the only one of our people who possesses to the full the supreme gift of silence. Finally I mentioned the report of a case of measles in the village, and Ev'leen Ann responded in kind with the news that her Aunt Emma had bought a potato planter. Ev'leen Ann is an orphan, brought up by a well-to-do spinster aunt, who is strong-minded and runs her own farm. After a time we glided by way of similar transitions to the mention of his name.

"'Niram Purdon tells me his stepmother is no better," I said. "Isn't it too bad?" I thought it well for Ev'leen Ann to be dragged out of her black cave of silence once in a while, even if it could be done only by force. As she made no answer, I went on. "Everybody who knows 'Niram thinks it splendid of him to do so much for his stepmother."

Ev'leen Ann responded with a detached air, as though speaking of a matter in China: "Well, it ain't any more than what he should. She was awful good to him when he was little and his father got so sick. I guess 'Niram wouldn't ha' had much to eat if she hadn't ha' gone out sewing to earn it for him and Mr. Purdon." She added firmly, after a mo-

ment's pause, "No, ma'am, I don't guess it's any more than what 'Niram had ought to do."

"But it's very hard on a young man to feel that he's not able to marry," I continued. Once in a great while we came so near the matter as this. Ev'leen Ann made no answer. Her face took on a pinched look of sickness. She set her lips as though she would never speak again. But I knew that a criticism of 'Niram would always rouse her, and said: "And really, I think 'Niram makes a great mistake to act as he does. A wife would be a help to him. She could take care of Mrs. Purdon and keep the house."

Ev'leen Ann rose to the bait, speaking quickly with some heat: "I guess 'Niram knows what's right for him to do! He can't afford to marry when he can't even keep up with the doctor's bills and all. He keeps the house himself, nights and mornings, and Mrs. Purdon is awful handy about taking care of herself, for all she's bedridden. That's her way, you know. She can't bear to have folks do for her. She'd die before she'd let anybody do anything for her that she could anyways do for herself!"

I sighed acquiescingly. Mrs. Purdon's fierce independence was a rock on which every attempt at sympathy or help shattered itself to atoms. There seemed to be no other emotion left in her poor old work-worn shell of a body. As I looked at Ev'leen Ann it seemed rather a hateful characteristic, and I remarked, "It seems to me it's asking a good deal of 'Niram to spoil his life in order that his stepmother can go on pretending she's independent."

Ev'leen Ann explained hastily: "Oh, 'Niram doesn't tell her anything about — she doesn't know he would like to — he don't want she should be worried — and, anyhow, as 'tis, he can't earn enough to keep ahead of all the doctors cost."

"But the right kind of a wife — a good, competent girl — could help out by earning something, too."

.. Ev'leen Ann looked at me forlornly, with no surprise. The idea was evidently not new to her. "Yes, ma'am, she could. But 'Niram says he ain't the kind of man to let his wife go out working." Even while she dropped under the killing verdict of his pride she was loyal to his standards and uttered no complaint. She went on, " 'Niram wants Aunt Em'line to have things the way she wants 'em, as near as he can give 'em to her — and it's right she should."

"Aunt Emeline?" I repeated, surprised at her absence of mind. "You mean Mrs. Purdon, don't you?"

Ev'leen Ann looked vexed at her slip, but she scorned to attempt any concealment. She explained dryly, with the shy, stiff embarrassment our country people have in speaking of private affairs: "Well, she *is* my Aunt Em'line, Mrs. Purdon is, though I don't hardly ever call her that. You see, Aunt Emma brought me up, and she and Aunt Em'line don't have anything to do with each other. They were twins, and when they were girls they got edgeways over 'Niram's father, when 'Niram was a baby and his father was a young widower and come courting. Then Aunt Em'line married him, and Aunt Emma never spoke to her afterward."

Occasionally, in walking unsuspectingly along one of our leafy lanes, some such fiery geyser of ancient heat uprears itself in a boiling column. I never get used to it, and started back now.

"Why, I never heard of that before, and I've known your Aunt Emma and Mrs. Purdon for years!"

"Well, they're pretty old now," said Ev'leen Ann listlessly, with the natural indifference of self-centered youth to the bygone tragedies of the preceding generation. "It happened quite some time ago. And both of them were so touchy, if anybody seemed to speak about it, that folks got in the way of letting it alone. First Aunt Emma wouldn't speak to her sister because she'd married the man she'd wanted, and then when Aunt Emma made out so well farmin' and got so well

off, why, then Mrs. Purdon wouldn't try to make up because she was so poor. That was after Mr. Purdon had had his stroke of paralysis and they'd lost their farm and she'd taken to goin' out sewin'—not but what she was always perfectly satisfied with her bargain. She always acted as though she'd rather have her husband's old shirt stuffed with straw than any other man's whole body. He was a real nice man, I guess, Mr. Purdon was."

There I had it—the curt, unexpanded chronicle of two passionate lives. And there I had also the key to Mrs. Purdon's fury of independence. It was the only way in which she could defend her husband against the charge, so damning to her world, of not having provided for his wife. It was the only monument she could rear to her husband's memory. And her husband had been all there was in life for her!

I stood looking at her young kinswoman's face, noting ~~the~~ granite under the velvet softness of its youth, and divining the flame underlying the granite. I longed to break through her wall and to put my arms about her, and on the impulse of the moment I cast aside the pretense of casualness in our talk.

"Oh, my dear!" I said. "Are you and 'Niram always to go on like this? Can't anybody help you?"

Ev'leen Ann looked at me, her face suddenly old and gray. "No, ma'am; we ain't going to go on this way. We've decided, 'Niram and I have, that it ain't no use. We've decided that we'd better not go places together any more or see each other. It's too—if 'Niram thinks we can't"—she flamed so that I knew she was burning from head to foot—"it's better for us not—" She ended in a muffled voice, hiding her face in the crook of her arm.

Ah, yes; now I knew why Ev'leen Ann had shut out the passionate breath of the spring night!

I stood near her, a lump in my throat, but I divined the anguish of her shame at her involuntary self-revelation, and

respected it. I dared do no more than to touch her shoulder gently.

The door behind us rattled. Ev'leen Ann sprang up and turned her face toward the wall. Paul's cousin came in, shuffling a little, blinking his eyes in the light of the unshaded lamp, and looking very cross and tired. He glanced at us without comment as he went over to the sink. "Nobody offered me anything good to drink," he complained, "so I came in to get some water from the faucet for my nightcap."

When he had drunk with ostentation from the tin dipper he went to the outside door and flung it open. "Don't you people know how hot and smelly it is in here?" he said, with his usual unceremonious abruptness.

The night wind burst in, eddying, and puffed out the lamp with a breath. In an instant the room was filled with coolness and perfumes and the rushing sound of the river. Out of the darkness came Ev'leen Ann's young voice. "It seems to me," she said, as though speaking to herself, "that I never heard the Mill Brook sound so loud as it has this spring."

I woke up that night with the start one has at a sudden call. But there had been no call. A profound silence spread itself through the sleeping house. Outdoors the wind had died down. Only the loud brawl of the river broke the stillness under the stars. But all through this silence and this vibrant song there rang a soundless menace which brought me out of bed and to my feet before I was awake. I heard Paul say, "What's the matter?" in a sleepy voice, and "Nothing," I answered, reaching for my dressing gown and slippers. I listened for a moment, my head ringing with all the frightened tales of the morbid vein of violence which runs through the character of our reticent people. There was still no sound. I went along the hall and up the stairs to Ev'leen Ann's room, and I opened the door without knocking. The room was empty.

Then how I ran! Calling loudly for Paul to join me, I ran down the two flights of stairs, out of the open door, and along the hedged path which leads down to the little river. The starlight was clear. I could see everything as plainly as though in early dawn. I saw the river, and I saw — Ev'leen Ann.

There was a dreadful moment of horror, which I shall never remember very clearly, and then Ev'leen Ann and I — both very wet — stood on the bank, shuddering in each other's arms.

Into our hysteria there dropped, like a pungent caustic, the arid voice of Horace, remarking, "Well, are you two people crazy, or are you walking in your sleep?"

I could feel Ev'leen Ann stiffen in my arms, and I fairly stepped back from her in astonished admiration as I heard her snatch at the straw thus offered, and still shuddering horribly from head to foot, force herself to say quite connectedly: "Why — yes — of course — I've always heard about my grandfather Parkman's walking in his sleep. Folks *said* 'twould come out in the family sometime."

Paul was close behind Horace — I wondered a little at his not being first — and with many astonished and inane ejaculations, such as people always make on startling occasions, we made our way back into the house to hot blankets and toddies. But I slept no more that night.

Sometime after dawn, however, I did fall into a troubled unconsciousness full of bad dreams, and only woke when the sun was quite high. I opened my eyes to see Ev'leen Ann about to close the door.

"Oh, did I wake you up?" she said. "I didn't mean to. That little Harris boy is here with a letter for you."

She spoke with a slightly defiant tone of self-possession. I tried to play up to her interpretation of her role.

"The little Harris boy?" I said, sitting up in bed. "What in the world is he bringing me a letter for?"

Ev'leen Ann, with her usual clear perception of the superfluous in conversation, vouchsafed no opinion on a matter where she had no information, but went downstairs and brought back the note. It was of four lines, and — surprisingly enough — from old Mrs. Purdon, who asked me abruptly if I would have my husband take me to see her. She specified, and underlined the specification, that I was to come "right off, and in the automobile." Wondering extremely at this mysterious bidding, I sought out Paul, who obediently cranked up our small car and carried me off. There was no sign of Horace about the house, but some distance on the other side of the village we saw his tall, stooping figure swinging along the road. He carried a cane and was characteristically occupied in violently switching off the heads from the wayside weeds as he walked. He refused our offer to take him in, alleging that he was out for exercise and to reduce his flesh — an ancient jibe at his bony frame which made him for an instant show a leathery smile.

There was, of course, no one at Mrs. Purdon's to let us into the tiny, three-roomed house, since the bedridden invalid spent her days there alone while 'Niram worked his team on other people's fields. Not knowing what we might find, Paul stayed outside in the car, while I stepped inside in answer to Mrs. Purdon's "Come *in*, why don't you!" which sounded quite as dry as usual. But when I saw her I knew that things were not as usual.

She lay flat on her back, the little emaciated wisp of humanity, hardly raising the piecework quilt enough to make the bed seem occupied, and to account for the thin, worn old face on the pillow. But as I entered the room her eyes seized on mine, and I was aware of nothing but them and some fury of determination behind them. With a fierce heat of impatience at my first natural but quickly repressed exclamation of surprise she explained briefly that she wanted Paul to lift her into the automobile and take her into the next town-

ship to the Hulett farm. "I'm so shrunk away to nuthin', I know I can lay on the back seat if I crook myself up," she said, with a cool accent but a rather shaky voice. Seeming to realize that even her intense desire to strike the matter-of-fact note could not take the place of any and all explanation of her extraordinary request, she added, holding my eyes steady with her own: "Emma Hulett's my twin sister. I guess it ain't so queer, my wanting to see her."

I thought, of course, we were to be used as the medium for some strange, sudden family reconciliation, and went out to ask Paul if he thought he could carry the old invalid to the car. He replied that, so far as that went, he could carry so thin an old body ten times around the town, but that he refused absolutely to take such a risk without authorization from her doctor. I remembered the burning eyes of resolution I had left inside, and sent him to present his objections to Mrs. Purdon herself.

In a few moments I saw him emerge from the house with the old woman in his arms. He had evidently taken her up just as she lay. The piecework quilt hung down in long folds, flashing its brilliant reds and greens in the sunshine, which shone so strangely upon the pallid old countenance, facing the open sky for the first time in years.

We drove in silence through the green and gold lyric of the spring day, an elderly company sadly out of key with the triumphant note of eternal youth which rang through all the visible world. Mrs. Purdon looked at nothing, said nothing, seemed to be aware of nothing but the purpose in her heart, whatever that might be. Paul and I, taking a leaf from our neighbors' book, held, with a courage like theirs, to their excellent habit of saying nothing when there is nothing to say. We arrived at the fine old Hulett place without the exchange of a single word.

"Now carry me in," said Mrs. Purdon briefly, evidently hoarding her strength.

"Wouldn't I better go and see if Miss Hulett is at home?" I asked.

Mrs. Purdon shook her head impatiently and turned her compelling eyes on my husband. I went up the path before them to knock at the door, wondering what the people in the house would possibly be thinking of us. There was no answer to my knock. "Open the door and go in," commanded Mrs. Purdon from out her quilt.

There was no one in the spacious, white-paneled hall, and no sound in all the big many-roomed house.

"Emma's out feeding the hens," conjectured Mrs. Purdon, not, I fancied, without a faint hint of relief in her voice. "Now carry me upstairs to the first room on the right."

Half hidden by his burden, Paul rolled wildly inquiring eyes at me; but he obediently staggered up the broad old staircase, and waiting till I had opened the first door to the right, stepped into the big bedroom.

"Put me down on the bed, and open them shutters," Mrs. Purdon commanded.

She still marshaled her forces with no lack of decision, but with a fainting voice which made me run over to her quickly as Paul laid her down on the four-poster. Her eyes were still indomitable, but her mouth hung open slackly and her color was startling. "Oh, Paul, quick! quick! Haven't you your flask with you?"

Mrs. Purdon informed me in a barely audible whisper, "In the corner cupboard at the head of the stairs," and I flew down the hallway. I returned with a bottle, evidently of great age. There was only a little brandy in the bottom, but it whipped up a faint color into the sick woman's lips.

As I was bending over her and Paul was thrusting open the shutters, letting in a flood of sunshine and flecky leaf-shadows, a firm, rapid step came down the hall, and a vigorous woman, with a tanned face and a clean, faded gingham

dress, stopped short in the doorway with an expression of stupefaction.

Mrs. Purdon put me on one side, and although she was physically incapable of moving her body by a hair's breadth, she gave the effect of having risen to meet the newcomer. "Well, Emma, here I am," she said in a queer voice, with involuntary quavers in it. As she went on she had it more under control, although in the course of her extraordinarily succinct speech it broke and failed her occasionally. When it did, she drew in her breath with an audible, painful effort, struggling forward steadily in what she had to say. "You see, Emma, it's this way: My 'Niram and your Ev'leen Ann have been keeping company — ever since they went to school together — you know that as well as I do, for all we let on we didn't, only I didn't know till just now how hard they took it. They can't get married because 'Niram can't keep even, let alone get ahead any, because I cost so much bein' sick, and the doctor says I may live for years this way, same's Aunt Hettie did. An' 'Niram is thirty-one, an' Ev'leen Ann is twenty-eight, an' they've had 'bout's much waitin' as is good for folks that set such store by each other. I've thought of every way out of it — and there ain't any. The Lord knows I don't enjoy livin' any, not so's to notice the enjoyment, and I'd thought of cutting my throat like Uncle Lish, but that'd make 'Niram and Ev'leen Ann feel so — to think why I'd done it; they'd never take the comfort they'd ought in bein' married; so that won't do. There's only one thing to do. I guess you'll have to take care of me till the Lord calls me. Maybe I won't last so long as the doctor thinks."

When she finished, I felt my ears ringing in the silence. She had walked to the sacrificial altar with so steady a step, and laid upon it her precious all with so gallant a front of quiet resolution, that for an instant I failed to take in the sublimity of her self-immolation. Mrs. Purdon asking for

charity! And asking the one woman who had most reason to refuse it to her.

Paul looked at me miserably, the craven desire to escape a scene written all over him. "Wouldn't we better be going, Mrs. Purdon?" I said uneasily. I had not ventured to look at the woman in the doorway.

Mrs. Purdon motioned me to remain, with an imperious gesture whose fierceness showed the tumult underlying her brave front. "No, I want you should stay. I want you should hear what I say, so's you can tell folks, if you have to. Now, look here, Emma," she went on to the other, still obstinately silent; "you must look at it the way 'tis. We're neither of us any good to anybody, the way we are—and I'm dreadfully in the way of the only two folks we care a pin about—either of us. You've got plenty to do with, and nothing to spend it on. I can't get myself out of their way by dying without going against what's Scripture and proper, but—" Her steely calm broke. She burst out in a screaming, hysterical voice: "You've just *got* to, Emma Hulett! You've just *got* to! If you don't I won't never go back to 'Niram's house! I'll lie in the ditch by the roadside till the poormaster comes to get me—and I'll tell everybody that it's because my own twin sister, with a house and a farm and money in the bank, turned me out to starve—" A fearful spasm cut her short. She lay twisted and limp, the whites of her eyes showing between the lids.

"Good God, she's gone!" cried Paul, running to the bed.

I was aware that the woman in the doorway had relaxed her frozen immobility and was between Paul and me as we rubbed the thin, icy hands and forced brandy between the placid lips. We all three thought her dead or dying, and labored over her with the frightened thankfulness for one another's living presence which always marks that dreadful moment. But even as we fanned and rubbed, and cried

out to one another to open the windows and to bring water, the blue lips moved to a ghostly whisper: "Em, listen—" The old woman went back to the nickname of their common youth. "Em—your Ev'leen Ann—tried to drown herself—in the Mill Brook last night. . . . That's what decided me—to—" And then we were plunged into another desperate struggle with Death for the possession of the battered old habitation of the dauntless soul before us.

"Isn't there any hot water in the house?" cried Paul, and "Yes, yes; a teakettle on the stove!" answered the woman who labored with us. Paul, divining that she meant the kitchen, fled downstairs. I stole a look at Emma Hulett's face as she bent over the sister she had not seen in thirty years, and I knew that Mrs. Purdon's battle was won. It even seemed that she had won another skirmish in her never-ending war with death, for a little warmth began to come back into her hands.

When Paul returned with the teakettle, and a hot-water bottle had been filled, the owner of the house straightened herself, assumed her rightful position as mistress of the situation, and began to issue commands. "You git right in the automobile, and go git the doctor," she told Paul. "That'll be the quickest. She's better now, and your wife and I can keep her goin' till the doctor gits here."

As Paul left the room she snatched something white from a bureau drawer, stripped the worn, patched old cotton night-gown from the skeletonlike body, and, handling the invalid with a strong, sure touch, slipped on a soft, woolly outing flannel wrapper with a curious trimming of zigzag braid down the front. Mrs. Purdon opened her eyes very slightly, but shut them again at her sister's quick command, "You lay still, Em'line, and drink some of this brandy." She obeyed without comment, but after a pause she opened her eyes again and looked down at the new garment which clad her. She had that moment turned back from the door of

death, but her first breath was used to set the scene for a return to a decent decorum.

"You're still a great hand for rickrack work, Em, I see," she murmured in a faint whisper. "Do you remember how surprised Aunt Su was when you made up a pattern?"

"Well, I hadn't thought of it for quite some time," returned Miss Hulett, in exactly the same tone of everyday remark. As she spoke she slipped her arm under the other's head and poked the pillow to a more comfortable shape. "Now you lay perfectly still," she commanded in the hectoring tone of the born nurse, "I'm goin' to run down and make you up a good hot cup of sassafras tea."

I followed her down into the kitchen and was met by the same refusal to be melodramatic which I had encountered in Ev'leen Ann. I was most anxious to know what version of my extraordinary morning I was to give out to the world, but hung silent, positively abashed by the cool casualness of the other woman as she mixed her brew. Finally, "Shall I tell 'Niram—What shall I say to Ev'leen Ann? If any-body asks me—" I brought out with clumsy hesitation.

At the realization that her reserve and family pride were wholly at the mercy of any report I might choose to give, even my iron hostess faltered. She stopped short in the middle of the floor, looked at me silently, piteously, and found no word.

I hastened to assure her that I would attempt no hateful picturesqueness of narration. "Suppose I just say that you were rather lonely here, now that Ev'leen Ann has left you, and that you thought it would be nice to have your sister come to stay with you, so that 'Niram and Ev'leen Ann can be married?"

Emma Hulett breathed again. She walked toward the stairs with the steaming cup in her hand. Over her shoulder she remarked, "Well, yes, ma'am; that would be as good a way to put it as any, I guess."

'Niram and Ev'leen Ann were standing up to be married. They looked very stiff and self-conscious, and Ev'leen Ann was very pale. 'Niram's big hands, bent in the crook of a man who handles tools, hung down by his new black trousers. Ev'leen Ann's strong fingers stood out stiffly from one another. They looked hard at the minister and repeated after him in low and meaningless tones the solemn and touching words of the marriage service. Back of them stood the wedding company, in freshly washed and ironed white dresses, new straw hats, and black suits smelling of camphor. In the background among the other elders, stood Paul and Horace and I — my husband and I hand in hand; Horace twiddling the black ribbon which holds his watch, and looking bored. Through the open windows into the stuffiness of the best room came an echo of the deep organ note of midsummer.

"Whom God hath joined together —" said the minister, and the epitome of humanity which filled the room held its breath — the old with a wonder upon their life-scarred faces, the young half frightened to feel the stir of the great wings soaring so near them.

Then it was all over. 'Niram and Ev'leen Ann were married, and the rest of us were bustling about to serve the hot biscuit and coffee and chicken salad, and to dish up the ice cream. Afterward there were no citified refinements of cramming rice down the necks of the departing pair or tying placards to the carriage in which they went away. Some of the men went out to the barn and hitched up for 'Niram, and we all went down to the gate to see them drive off. They might have been going for one of their Sunday afternoon "buggy rides" except for the wet eyes of the foolish women and girls who stood waving their hands in answer to the flutter of Ev'leen Ann's handkerchief as the carriage went down the hill.

We had nothing to say to one another after they left, and

began soberly to disperse to our respective vehicles. But as I was getting into our car a new thought suddenly struck me.

"Why," I cried, "I never thought of it before! However in the world did old Mrs. Purdon know about Ev'leen Ann — that night?"

Horace was pulling at the door, which was badly adjusted and shut hard. He closed it with a vicious slam. "I told her," he said crossly.



DOROTHY CANFIELD grew up in an atmosphere of books and learning. Her father, James H. Canfield, was president of Kansas University, at Lawrence, and there Dorothy was born, February 17, 1879. She attended the high school at Lawrence and took her college work at Ohio State and Columbia University. Romance languages were her special field, and she received her degree of Doctor of Philosophy in 1904. Books did not absorb all of her time, however, for the next item in her biography is her marriage to John R. Fisher, who had been the captain of the Columbia football team. They made their home at Arlington, Vermont, with frequent visits to Europe.

The Squirrel Cage, published in 1912, was a study of an unhappy marriage. A second novel, *The Bent Twig*, had college life as its setting; the chief character was the daughter of a professor in a Middle Western university. Mrs. Fisher had also published in magazines a number of short stories dealing with various types of New England country people. In 1916 these were gathered into a volume, with the title *Hillsboro People*, which met with a wide acceptance, not only in this country but in France. "Flint and Fire" is taken from this book.

Meanwhile the first World War had come, and its summons was heard in their quiet mountain home. Mr. Fisher went to France with the Ambulance Corps; his wife as a war-relief worker. Out of the fullness of these experiences she

wrote her next book, *Home Fires in France*, which at once took rank as one of the most notable pieces of literature inspired by that war. It is in the form of short stories, but only the form is fiction: it is a perfectly truthful portrayal of the French women and of some Americans who, far back of the trenches, kept up the life of the nation.

During the second World War, Mrs. Fisher concerned herself passionately with the welfare of the children in the stricken countries. The "Children's Crusade," organized and administered through her untiring efforts, was an expression of good will, sympathy, and money from the children of free America to their little friends in countries torn by war. She continues to write essays, short stories, and novels and to exert a very definite influence upon social and educational trends in this country.

Two of the City's Millions

“Boy meets girl” has become a catch phrase to characterize the usual formula for contemporary love stories, plays, radio dramas, and popular songs. It is so hackneyed that almost anyone can accurately foretell every step in the plot; only the names and the places change. That O. Henry did not follow a formula for his stories is one reason that his tales will never die, while most of the current magazine stories disappear from the memory almost as soon and as certainly as they reach the wastebasket. The following story is from The Four Million which includes tales of those unimportant people who, in any great city, live their little lives, find their small joys, and bear their tragedies, unknown to the world and often even to their neighbors. Jim might have been a clerk, or an accountant, or any other low-salaried “white-collar” worker. The Magi were Wise Men. You remember the rich gifts that they brought to the Holy Child in Bethlehem. You will see how the title fits the story.

THE GIFT OF THE MAGI

by O. HENRY

One dollar and eighty-seven cents. That was all. And sixty cents of it was in pennies. Pennies saved one and two at a time by bulldozing the grocer and the vegetable man and the butcher until one's cheeks burned with the silent imputation of parsimony that such close dealing implied. Three times Della counted it. One dollar and eighty-seven cents. And the next day would be Christmas.

There was clearly nothing to do but flop down on the shabby little couch and howl. So Della did it. Which instigates the moral reflection that life is made up of sobs, sniffles, and smiles, with sniffles predominating.

While the mistress of the house is gradually subsiding from the first stage to the second, take a look at the home. A furnished flat at \$8 per week. It did not exactly beggar description, but it certainly had that word on the lookout for the mendicancy squad.

In the vestibule below was a letter box into which no letter would go, and an electric button from which no mortal finger could coax a ring. Also appertaining thereunto was a card bearing the name "Mr. James Dillingham Young."

The "Dillingham" had been flung to the breeze during a former period of prosperity when its possessor was being paid \$30 per week. Now, when the income was shrunk to \$20, the letters of "Dillingham" looked blurred, as though they were thinking seriously of contracting to a modest and unassuming D. But whenever Mr. James Dillingham Young

came home and reached his flat above he was called " Jim " and greatly hugged by Mrs. James Dillingham Young, already introduced to you as Della. Which is all very good.

Della finished her cry and attended to her cheeks with the powder puff. She stood by the window and looked out dully at a gray cat walking a gray fence in a gray backyard. Tomorrow would be Christmas Day, and she had only \$1.87 with which to buy Jim a present. She had been saving every penny she could for months, with this result. Twenty dollars a week doesn't go far. Expenses had been greater than she had calculated. They always are. Only \$1.87 to buy a present for Jim. Her Jim. Many a happy hour she had spent planning for something nice for him. Something fine and rare and sterling — something just a little bit near to being worthy of the honor of being owned by Jim.

There was a pier glass between the windows of the room. Perhaps you have seen a pier glass in an \$8 flat. A very thin and very agile person may, by observing his reflection in a rapid sequence of longitudinal strips, obtain a fairly accurate conception of his looks. Della, being slender, had mastered the art.

Suddenly she whirled from the window and stood before the glass. Her eyes were shining brilliantly, but her face had lost its color within twenty seconds. Rapidly she pulled down her hair and let it fall to its full length.

Now, there were two possessions of the James Dillingham Youngs in which they both took a mighty pride. One was Jim's gold watch that had been his father's and his grandfather's. The other was Della's hair. Had the Queen of Sheba lived in the flat across the airshaft, Della would have let her hair hang out the window some day to dry just to deprecate Her Majesty's jewels and gifts. Had King Solomon been the janitor, with all his treasures piled up in the basement, Jim would have pulled out his watch every time he passed, just to see him pluck at his beard from envy.

So now Della's beautiful hair fell about her, rippling and shining like a cascade of brown waters. It reached below her knee and made itself almost a garment for her. And then she did it up again nervously and quickly. Once she faltered for a minute and stood still while a tear or two splashed on the worn red carpet.

On went her old brown jacket; on went her old brown hat. With a whirl of skirts and with the brilliant sparkle still in her eyes, she fluttered out the door and down the stairs to the street.

Where she stopped the sign read: "Mme. Sofronie. Hair Goods of All Kinds." One flight up Della ran, and collected herself, panting. Madame, large, too white, chilly, hardly looked the "Sofronie."

"Will you buy my hair?" asked Della.

"I buy hair," said Madame. "Take yer hat off and let's have a sight at the looks of it."

Down rippled the brown cascade.

"Twenty dollars," said Madame, lifting the mass with a practiced hand.

"Give it to me quick," said Della.

Oh, and the next two hours tripped by on rosy wings. Forget the hashed metaphor. She was ransacking the stores for Jim's present.

She found it at last. It surely had been made for Jim and no one else. There was no other like it in any of the stores, and she had turned all of them inside out. It was a platinum fob chain, simple and chaste in design, properly proclaiming its value by substance and not by meretricious ornamentation—as all good things should do. It was even worthy of The Watch.

As soon as she saw it she knew that it must be Jim's. It was like him. Quietness and value—the description applied to both. Twenty-one dollars they took from her for it, and she hurried home with the eighty-seven cents. With

that chain on his watch Jim might be properly anxious about the time in any company. Grand as the watch was, he sometimes looked at it on the sly on account of the old leather strap that he used in place of a chain.

When Della reached home her intoxication gave way a little to prudence and reason. She got out her curling irons and lighted the gas and went to work repairing the ravages made by generosity added to love. Which is always a tremendous task, dear friends — a mammoth task.

Within forty minutes her head was covered with tiny, close-lying curls that made her look wonderfully like a truant schoolboy. She looked at her reflection in the mirror long, carefully, and critically.

“ If Jim doesn’t kill me,” she said to herself, “ before he takes a second look at me, he’ll say I look like a Coney Island chorus girl. But what could I do — oh! what could I do with a dollar and eighty-seven cents? ”

At seven o’clock the coffee was made and the frying pan was on the back of the stove hot and ready to cook the chops.

Jim was never late. Della doubled the fob chain in her hand and sat on the corner of the table near the door that he always entered. Then she heard his step on the stair away down on the first flight and she turned white for just a moment. She had a habit of saying little silent prayers about the simplest everyday things, and now she whispered:

“ Please God, make him think I am still pretty.”

The door opened and Jim stepped in and closed it. He looked thin and very serious. Poor fellow, he was only twenty-two — and to be burdened with a family! He needed a new overcoat and he was without gloves.

Jim stopped inside the door, as immovable as a setter at the scent of quail. His eyes were fixed upon Della, and there was an expression in them that she could not read, and it terrified her. It was not anger, nor surprise, nor disapproval, nor horror, nor any of the sentiments that she had been pre-

pared for. He simply stared at her fixedly with that peculiar expression on his face.

Della wriggled off the table and went to him.

"Jim, darling," she cried, "don't look at me that way. I had my hair cut off and sold it because I couldn't have lived through Christmas without giving you a present. It'll grow out again — you won't mind, will you? I just had to do it. My hair grows awfully fast. Say 'Merry Christmas!' Jim, and let's be happy. You don't know what a nice — what a beautiful, nice gift I've got for you."

"You've cut off your hair?" asked Jim, laboriously, as if he had not arrived at that patent fact yet even after the hardest mental labor.

"Cut it off and sold it," said Della. "Don't you like me just as well, anyhow? I'm me without my hair, ain't I?"

Jim looked about the room curiously.

"You say your hair is gone?" he said, with an air almost of idiocy.

"You needn't look for it," said Della. "It's sold, I tell you — sold and gone, too. It's Christmas Eve, boy. Be good to me, for it went for you. Maybe the hairs of my head were numbered," she went on with a sudden serious sweetness, "but nobody could ever count my love for you. Shall I put the chops on, Jim?"

Out of his trance Jim seemed quickly to awake. He enfolded his Della. For ten seconds let us regard with discreet scrutiny some inconsequential object in the other direction. Eight dollars a week or a million a year — what is the difference? A mathematician or a wit would give you the wrong answer. The magi brought valuable gifts, but that was not among them. This dark assertion will be illuminated later on.

Jim drew a package from his overcoat pocket and threw it upon the table.

"Don't make any mistake, Dell," he said, "about me. I

don't think there's anything in the way of a haircut or a shave or a shampoo that could make me like my girl any less. But if you'll unwrap that package you may see why you had me going awhile at first."

White fingers and nimble tore at the string and paper. And then an ecstatic scream of joy; and then, alas! a quick feminine change to hysterical tears and wails, necessitating the immediate employment of all the comforting powers of the lord of the flat.

For there lay The Combs — the set of combs, side and back, that Della had worshiped for long in a Broadway window. Beautiful combs, pure tortoise shell, with jeweled rims — just the shade to wear in the beautiful vanished hair. They were expensive combs, she knew, and her heart had simply craved and yearned over them without the least hope of possession. And now, they were hers, but the tresses that should have adorned the coveted adornments were gone.

But she hugged them to her bosom, and at length she was able to look up with dim eyes and a smile and say: "My hair grows so fast, Jim!"

And then Della leaped up like a little singed cat and cried, "Oh, oh!"

Jim had not yet seen his beautiful present. She held it out to him eagerly upon her open palm. The dull precious metal seemed to flash with reflection of her bright and ardent spirit.

"Isn't it a dandy, Jim? I hunted all over town to find it. You'll have to look at the time a hundred times a day now. Give me your watch. I want to see how it looks on it."

Instead of obeying, Jim tumbled down on the couch and put his hands under the back of his head and smiled.

"Dell," said he, "let's put our Christmas presents away and keep 'em awhile. They're too nice to use just at present. I sold the watch to get the money to buy your combs. And now suppose you put the chops on."

The magi, as you know, were wise men — wonderfully wise men — who brought gifts to the Babe in the manger. They invented the art of giving Christmas presents. Being wise, their gifts were no doubt wise ones, possibly bearing the privilege of exchange in case of duplication. And here I have lameiy related to you the uneventful chronicle of two foolish children in a flat who most unwisely sacrificed for each other the greatest treasures of their house. But in a last word to the wise of these days let it be said that of all who give gifts these two were the wisest. Of all who give and receive gifts, such as they are wisest. Everywhere they are wisest. They are the magi.

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WILLIAM SIDNEY PORTER (O. Henry) came to New York in 1902, almost unknown. At his death eight years later, he was the best known writer of short stories in America. His life was as full of ups and downs, and of strange turns of fortune, as one of his own stories. Mr. Porter, who always signed his stories O. Henry, was born in Greensboro, North Carolina, September 11, 1862.

In 1882 he went to Texas and lived on a ranch, acting as cowboy and at odd moments studying French, German, and Spanish. Then he went to Austin, where at various times he was clerk, editor, bookkeeper, draftsman, actor, cartoonist, and bank teller. In 1887, he married Miss Athol Roach and purchased a paper of his own which he called *Rolling Stones*. After a year the paper failed, and the editor went to Houston to become a reporter on the *Daily Post*. A year after he had left the bank in Austin, Texas, it was discovered that there were serious irregularities in the records. Several arrests were made, and O. Henry was called to stand trial with others. He had not been guilty of wrongdoing, but the affairs of the bank had been so loosely managed that he was afraid he would be convicted, so he fled to Central America. After a year there, he heard that his wife's health

was failing and returned to Austin to give himself up. He was found guilty and sentenced to five years in the Ohio penitentiary, but his time in prison was shortened by good behavior to a little more than three years, ending in 1901. His wife died before the trial. During this period he wrote a number of stories, sending them to friends who in turn mailed them to publishers. One editor wrote to O. Henry urging him to come to New York and offering him a hundred dollars apiece for a dozen stories. He came, and from that time made New York his home, becoming very fond of Little-Old-Bagdad-on-the-Subway as he called it.

It was the common man — the clerk, the bartender, the policeman, the waiter, the tramp, that O. Henry chose for his characters. He loved to talk to chance acquaintances on park benches or in cheap lodging houses, to see life from their point of view. His stories are often of the picaresque type, a name given to a kind of story in which the hero is an adventurer, sometimes a rogue. He sees redeeming traits even in rogues. His plots usually have a turn of surprise at the end; sometimes the very last sentence suddenly illuminates the whole story. His style is quick, nervous, and often slangy. He is wonderfully skillful in hitting just the right word or phrase, while his descriptions are notable for telling much in a few words. He established a definite type of short story writing, and in many of the stories written today one may still see the influence of O. Henry.

Some of the well-known collections of short stories by O. Henry are: *Cabbages and Kings*, *The Four Million*, *The Trimmed Lamp*, *The Voice of the City*, *The Gentle Grafters*, *Heart of the West*, *Roads of Destiny*, *Options*, *Strictly Business*, *Whirligigs*, *Sixes and Sevens*, and *Rolling Stones*.

P. S. Please notice the period after the O. People have been known to spell the word as if it were like O'Brien. The O doesn't mean a thing. It just sounded well with Henry.

P. P. S. In answer to your unspoken question — yes, the name of the well-known candy bar is just a play on Mr. Porter's pen name.

Deep South

Even if you have not yet read Up from Slavery, you may know something about Booker T. Washington, one of America's greatest citizens, who founded Tuskegee Institute for the education of the Negro. You probably know about such contemporary figures as Roland Hayes, Paul Robeson, and Marian Anderson in the world of music; Countee Cullen and Langston Hughes in poetry; Dr. George Washington Carver in science; or some of the many Negro actors. The Negro is a natural musician and actor. The earnest and courageous young Negro minister is not so well known, however. There is no audience to applaud his efforts, but he deserves attention. His work is far from easy, and the material rewards are exceedingly small, but we learn from this story by Paul Laurence Dunbar what other satisfactions make his hard life bearable. The story is from the book, Folks from Dixie.

THE ORDEAL AT MT. HOPE

by PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

“And this is Mt. Hope,” said the Rev. Howard Dokesbury to himself as he descended, bag in hand, from the smoky, dingy coach, or part of a coach, which was assigned to his people, and stepped upon the rotten planks of the station platform. The car he had just left was not a palace, nor had his reception by his fellow passengers or his intercourse with them been of such cordial nature as to endear them to him. But he watched the choky little engine with its three black cars wind out of sight with a look as regretful as if he were witnessing the departure of his dearest friend. Then he turned his attention again to his surroundings, and a sigh welled up from his heart. “And this is Mt. Hope,” he repeated. A note in his voice indicated that he fully appreciated the spirit of keen irony in which the place had been named.

The color scheme of the picture that met his eyes was in dingy blacks and grays. The building that held the ticket, telegraph, and train dispatcher’s offices was a miserably old ramshackle affair, standing well in the foreground of this scene of gloom and desolation. Its windows were so coated with smoke and grime that they seemed to have been painted over in order to secure secrecy within. Here and there a lazy cur lay drowsily snapping at the flies, and at the end of the

station, perched on boxes or leaning against the wall, making a living picture of equal laziness, stood a group of idle Negroes exchanging rude badinage with their white counterparts across the street.

After a while this bantering interchange would grow more keen and personal, a free-for-all friendly fight would follow, and the newspaper correspondent in that section would write it up as a "race war." But this had not happened yet that day.

"This is Mt. Hope," repeated the newcomer; "this is the field of my labors."

Rev. Howard Dokesbury, as may already have been inferred, was a Negro — there could be no mistake about that. The deep dark brown of his skin, the rich overfullness of his lips, and the close curl of his short black hair were evidences that admitted of no argument. He was a finely proportioned, stalwart-looking man, with a general air of self-possession and self-sufficiency in his manner. There was firmness in the set of his lips. A reader of character would have said of him, "Here is a man of solid judgment, careful in deliberation, prompt in execution, and decisive."

It was the perception in him of these very qualities which had prompted the authorities of the little college where he had taken his degree and received his theological training, to urge him to go among his people at the South, and there to exert his powers for good where the field was broad and the laborers few.

Born of Southern parents from whom he had learned many of the superstitions and traditions of the South, Howard Dokesbury himself had never before been below Mason and Dixon's line. But with a confidence born of youth and a consciousness of personal power, he had started South with the idea that he knew the people with whom he had to deal, and was equipped with the proper weapons to cope with their shortcomings.

But as he looked around upon the scene which now met his eye, a doubt arose in his mind. He picked up his bag with a sigh and approached a man who had been standing apart from the rest of the loungers and regarding him with indolent intentness.

"Could you direct me to the house of Stephen Gray?" asked the minister.

The interrogated took time to change his position from left foot to right and shift his quid, before he drawled forth, "I reckon you's de new Mefdis preachah, huh?"

"Yes," replied Howard, in the most conciliatory tone he could command, "and I hope I find in you one of my flock."

"No, suh, I's a Babtist myse'f. I wa'n't raised up no place erroun' Mt. Hope; I'm nachelly f'om way up in Adams County. Dey jes' sont me down hyeah to fin' you an' tek you up to Steve's. Steve, he's workin' today an' couldn't come down."

He laid particular stress upon the "today," as if Steve's spell of activity were not an everyday occurrence.

"Is it far from here?" asked Dokesbury.

"'T ain't mo' 'n a mile an' a ha'f by de shawt cut."

"Well, then, let's take the short cut, by all means," said the preacher.

They trudged along for a while in silence, and then the young man asked, "What do you men about here do mostly for a living?"

"Oh, well, we does odd jobs, we saws an' splits wood an' totes bundles, an' some of 'em raises gyahden, but mos' of us, we fishes. De fish bites an' we ketches 'em. Sometimes we eats 'em an' sometimes we sells 'em; a string o' fish'll bring a peck o' co'n any time."

"And is that all you do?"

"'Bout."

"Why, I don't see how you live that way."

"Oh, we lives all right," answered the man; "we has plenty to eat an' drink, an' clothes to wear, an' some place to stay. I reckon folks ain't got much use fu' nuffin' mo'."

Dokesbury sighed. Here indeed was virgin soil for his ministerial labors. His spirits were not materially raised when, some time later, he came in sight of the house which was to be his abode. To be sure, it was better than most of the houses which he had seen in the Negro part of Mt. Hope; but even at that it was far from being good or comfortable-looking. It was small and mean in appearance. The weather boarding was broken, and in some places entirely fallen away, showing the great unhewn logs beneath; while off the boards that remained the whitewash had peeled in scrofulous spots.

The minister's guide went up to the closed door, and rapped loudly with a heavy stick.

"G' way f'om dah, an' quit you' foolin'," came in a large voice from within.

The guide grinned, and rapped again. There was a sound of shuffling feet and the pushing back of a chair, and then the same voice asking: "I bet I'll mek you git away f'om dat do'."

"Dat's A'nt Ca'line," the guide said, and laughed.

The door was flung back as quickly as its worn hinges and sagging bottom would allow, and a large body surmounted by a face like a big round full moon presented itself in the opening. A broomstick showed itself aggressively in one fat shiny hand.

"It's you, Tom Scott, is it — you trif'nin' — " and then, catching sight of the stranger, her whole manner changed, and she dropped the broomstick with an embarrassed "'Scuse me, suh."

Tom chuckled all over as he said, "A'nt Ca'line, dis is yo' new preachah."

The big black face lighted up with a broad smile as the

old woman extended her hand and enveloped that of the young minister.

"Come in," she said. "I's mighty glad to see you — that no'-count Tom come put' nigh mekin' me 'spose myse'f." Then turning to Tom, she exclaimed with good-natured severity, "An' you go 'long, you scoun'll you!"

The preacher entered the cabin — it was hardly more — and seated himself in the rush-bottomed chair which "A'nt Ca'line" had been industriously polishing with her apron.

"An' now, Brothah —"

"Dokesbury," supplemented the young man.

"Brothah Dokesbury, I jes' want you to mek yo'se'f at home right erway. I know you ain't use to ouah ways down hyeah; but you jes' got to set in an' git ust to 'em. You mus'n' feel bad ef things don't go yo' way f'om de ve'y fust. Have you got a mammy?"

The question was very abrupt, and a lump suddenly jumped up in Dokesbury's throat and pushed the water into his eyes. He did have a mother away back there at home. She was all alone, and he was her heart and the hope of her life.

"Yes," he said, "I've got a little mother up there in Ohio."

"Well, I's gwine to be yo' mothah down hyeah; dat is, ef I ain't too rough an' common fu' you."

"Hush!" exclaimed the preacher, and he got up and took the old lady's hand in both of his own. "You shall be my mother down here; you shall help me, as you have done today. I feel better already."

"I knowed you would," and the old face beamed on the young one. "An' now jes' go out de do' dah an' wash yo' face. Dey's a pan an' soap an' watah right dah, an' hyeah's a towel; den you kin go right into yo' room, fu' I knows you want to be erlone fu' a while. I'll fix you' suppah while you rests."

He did as he was bidden. On a rough bench outside the

door, he found a basin and a bucket of water with a tin dipper in it. To one side, in a broken saucer, lay a piece of coarse soap. The facilities for copious ablutions were not abundant, but one thing the minister noted with pleasure: the towel, which was rough and hurt his skin, was, nevertheless, scrupulously clean. He went to his room feeling fresher and better, and although he found the place little and dark and warm, it too was clean, and a sense of its homeness began to take possession of him.

The room was off the main living room into which he had been first ushered. It had one small window that opened out on a fairly neat yard. A table with a chair before it stood beside the window, and across the room—if the three feet of space which intervened could be called “across”—stood the little bed with its dark calico quilt and white pillows. There was no carpet on the floor, and the absence of a washstand indicated very plainly that the occupant was expected to wash outside. The young minister knelt for a few minutes beside the bed, and then rising cast himself into the chair to rest.

It was possibly half an hour later when his partial nap was broken in upon by the sound of a gruff voice from without saying, “He’s hyeah, is he—oomph! Well, what’s he ac’ lak? Want us to git down on ouah knees an’ crawl to him? If he do, I reckon he’ll fin’ dat Mt. Hope ain’t de place fo’ him.”

The minister did not hear the answer, which was in a low voice and came, he conjectured, from Aunt “Ca’line”; but the gruff voice subsided, and there was the sound of footsteps going out of the room. A tap came on the preacher’s door, and he opened it to the old woman. She smiled reassuringly.

“Dat’ uz my ol’ man,” she said. “I sont him out to git some wood, so’s I’d have time to post you. , Don’t you mind him; he’s lots mo’ ba’k dan bite. He’s one o’ dese little

yaller men, an' you know dey kin be powahful contra'y when dey sets dey hai'd to it. But jes' you treat him nice an' don't let on, an' I'll be boun' you'll bring him erroun' in little er no time."

The Rev. Mr. Dokesbury received this advice with some misgiving. Albeit he had assumed his pleasantest manner when, after his return to the living room, the little "yaller" man came through the door with his bundle of wood.

He responded cordially to Aunt Caroline's, "Dis is my husband, Brothah Dokesbury," and heartily shook his host's reluctant hand.

"I hope I find you well, Brother Gray," he said.

"Moder't, jes', moder't," was the answer.

"Come to suppah now, bofe o' you," said the old lady, and they all sat down to the evening meal of crisp bacon, well-fried potatoes, egg-pone, and coffee.

The young man did his best to be agreeable, but it was rather discouraging to receive only gruff monosyllabic rejoinders to his most interesting observations. But the cheery old wife came bravely to the rescue, and the minister was continually floated into safety on the flow of her conversation. Now and then, as he talked, he could catch a stealthy upflashing of Stephen Gray's eye, as suddenly lowered again, that told him that the old man was listening. But as an indication that they would get on together, the supper, taken as a whole, was not a success. The evening that followed proved hardly more fortunate. About the only remarks that could be elicited from the "little yaller man" were a reluctant "oomph" or "oomph-uh."

It was just before going to bed that, after a period of reflection, Aunt Caroline began slowly: "We got a son" — her husband immediately bristled up and his eyes flashed, but the old woman went on; "he named 'Lias, an' we thinks a heap o' 'Lias, we does; but —" the old man had subsided, but he bristled up again at the word — "he ain't jes' whut

we want him to be." Her husband opened his mouth as if to speak in defense of his son, but was silent in satisfaction at his wife's explanation: "'Lias ain't bad; he jes' ca'less. Sometimes he stays at home, but right sma't o' de time he stays down at"—she looked at her husband and hesitated—"at de colo'ed s'loon. We don't lak dat. It ain't no fitten place fu' him. But 'Lias ain't bad, he jes' ca'less, an' me an' de ol' man we 'membahs him in ouah pra'ahs, an' I jes' t'ought I'd ax you to 'membah him too, Brothah Dokesbury."

The minister felt the old woman's pleading look and the husband's intense gaze upon his face, and suddenly there came to him an intimate sympathy in their trouble and with it an unexpected strength.

"There is no better time than now," he said, "to take his case to the Almighty Power, let us pray."

Perhaps it was the same prayer he had prayed many times before, perhaps the words of supplication and the plea for light and guidance were the same; but somehow to the young man kneeling there amid those humble surroundings, with the sorrow of these poor ignorant people weighing upon his heart, it seemed very different. It came more fervently from his lips, and the words had a deeper meaning. When he arose, there was a warmth at his heart just the like of which he had never before experienced.

Aunt Caroline blundered up from her knees, saying, as she wiped her eyes, "Blessed is dey dat mou'n, fu' dey shall be comfo'ted." The old man, as he turned to go to bed, shook the young man's hand warmly and in silence; but there was a moisture in the old eyes that told the minister that his plummet of prayer had sounded the depths.

Alone in his own room Howard Dokesbury sat down to study the situation in which he had been placed. Had his thorough college training anticipated specifically any such circumstance as this? After all, did he know his own people?

Was it possible that they could be so different from what he had seen and known? He had always been such a loyal Negro, so proud of his honest brown; but had he been mistaken? Was he, after all, different from the majority of the people with whom he was supposed to have all thoughts, feelings, and emotions in common?

These and other questions he asked himself without being able to arrive at any satisfactory conclusion. He did not go to sleep soon after retiring, and the night brought many thoughts. The next day would be Saturday. The ordeal had already begun — now there were twenty-four hours between him and the supreme trial. What would be its outcome? There were moments when he felt, as every man, howsoever brave, must feel at times, that he would like to shift all his responsibilities and go away from the place that seemed destined to tax his powers beyond their capability of endurance. What could he do for the inhabitants of Mt. Hope? What was required of him to do? Ever through his mind ran that world-old question: "Am I my brother's keeper?" He had never asked, "Are these people my brothers?"

He was up early the next morning, and as soon as breakfast was done, he sat down to add a few touches to the sermon he had prepared as his introduction. It was not the first time that he had retouched it and polished it up here and there. Indeed, he had taken some pride in it. But as he read it over that day, it did not sound to him as it had sounded before. It appeared flat and without substance. After a while he laid it aside, telling himself that he was nervous and it was on this account that he could not see matters as he did in his calmer moments. He told himself, too, that he must not again take up the offending discourse until time to use it, lest the discovery of more imaginary flaws should so weaken his confidence that he would not be able to deliver it with effect.

In order better to keep his resolve, he put on his hat and went out for a walk through the streets of Mt. Hope. He did not find an encouraging prospect as he went along. The Negroes whom he met viewed him with ill-favor, and the whites who passed looked on him with unconcealed distrust and contempt. He began to feel lost, alone, and helpless. The squalor and shiftlessness which were plainly in evidence about the houses which he saw filled him with disgust and a dreary hopelessness.

He passed vacant lots which lay open and inviting children to healthful play; but instead of marbles or leapfrog or ball, he found little boys in ragged knickerbockers huddled together on the ground, "shooting craps" with precocious avidity and quarreling over the pennies that made the pitiful wagers. He heard glib profanity rolling from the lips of children who should have been stumbling through baby catechisms; and his heart ached for them.

He would have turned and gone back to his room, but the sound of shouts, laughter, and the tum-tum of a musical instrument drew him on down the street. At the turn of a corner, the place from which the noise emanated met his eyes. It was a rude frame building, low and unpainted. The panes in its windows whose places had not been supplied by sheets of tin were daubed a dingy red. Numerous kegs and bottles on the outside attested the nature of the place. The front door was open, but the interior was concealed by a gaudy curtain stretched across the entrance within. Over the door was the inscription, in straggling characters, "Sander's Place"; and when he saw half-a-dozen Negroes enter, the minister knew instantly that he now beheld the colored saloon which was the frequenting place of his hostess's son 'Lias; and he wondered, if, as the mother said, her boy was not bad, how anything good could be preserved in such a place of evil.

The cries of boisterous laughter mingled with the strum-

ming of the banjo and the shuffling of feet told him that they were engaged in one of their rude hoe-down dances. He had not passed a dozen paces beyond the door when the music was suddenly stopped, the sound of a quick blow followed, then ensued a scuffle, and a young fellow half ran, half fell through the open door. He was closely followed by a heavily built ruffian who was striking him as he ran. The young fellow was very much the weaker and slighter of the two, and was suffering great punishment. In an instant all the preacher's sense of justice was stung into sudden life. Just as the brute was about to give his victim a blow that would have sent him into the gutter, he felt his arm grasped in a detaining hold and heard a commanding voice — "Stop!"

He turned with increased fury upon this meddler, but his other wrist was caught and held in a viselike grip. For a moment the two men looked into each other's eyes. Hot words rose to the young man's lips, but he choked them back. Until this moment he had deplored the possession of a spirit so easily fired that it had been a test of his manhood to keep from "slugging" on the football field; now he was glad of it. He did not attempt to strike the man, but stood holding his arms and meeting the brute glare with manly flashing eyes. Either the natural cowardice of the bully or something in his new opponent's face had quelled the big fellow's spirit, and he said doggedly, "Lemme go. I wasn't a-go'n to kill him nohow, but ef I ketch him dancin' with my gal any mo', I — " He cast a glance full of malice at his victim, who stood on the pavement a few feet away, as much amazed as the dum-founded crowd which thronged the door of "Sander's Place." Loosing his hold, the preacher turned, and, putting his hand on the young fellow's shoulder, led him away.

For a time they walked on in silence. Dokesbury had to calm the tempest in his breast before he could trust his voice. After a while he said: "That fellow was making it pretty hot for you, my young friend. What had you done to him?"

"Nothin'," replied the other. "I was jes' dancin' 'long an' not thinkin' 'bout him, when all of a sudden he hollered dat I had his gal an' commenced hittin' me."

"He's a bully and a coward, or he would not have made use of his superior strength in that way. What's your name, friend?"

"Lias Gray," was the answer, which startled the minister into exclaiming —

"What! are you Aunt Caroline's son?"

"Yes, suh, I sho is; does you know my mothah?"

"Why, I'm stopping with her, and we were talking about you last night. My name is Dokesbury, and I am to take charge of the church here."

"I thought mebbe you was a preachah, but I couldn't scarcely believe it after I seen de way you held Sam an' looked at him."

Dokesbury laughed, and his merriment seemed to make his companion feel better, for the sullen, abashed look left his face, and he laughed a little himself as he said: "I wasn't a-pesterin' Sam, but I tell you he pestered me mighty."

Dokesbury looked into the boy's face — he was hardly more than a boy — lit up as it was by a smile, and concluded that Aunt Caroline was right. 'Lias might be "ca'less," but he wasn't a bad boy. The face was too open and the eyes too honest for that. 'Lias wasn't bad; but environment does so much, and he would be if something were not done for him. Here, then, was work for a pastor's hands.

"You'll walk on home with me, 'Lias, won't you?"

"I reckon I mout ez well," replied the boy. "I don't stay erroun' home ez much ez I oughter."

"You'll be around more, of course, now that I am there. It will be so much less lonesome for two young people than for one. Then, you can be a great help to me, too."

The preacher did not look down to see how wide his listener's eyes grew as he answered: "Oh, I ain't fittin' to be

no he'p to you, suh. Fust thing, I ain't nevah got religion, an' then I ain't well larned enough."

"Oh, there are a thousand other ways in which you can help, and I feel sure that you will."

"Of co'se, I'll do de ve'y bes' I kin."

"There is one thing I want you to do soon, as a favor to me."

"I can't go to de mou'nah's bench," cried the boy, in consternation.

"And I don't want you to," was the calm reply.

Another look of wide-eyed astonishment took in the preacher's face. These were strange words from one of his guild. But without noticing the surprise he had created, Dokesbury went on: "What I want is that you will take me fishing as soon as you can. I never get tired of fishing, and I am anxious to go here. Tom Scott says you fish a great deal about here."

"Why, we kin go dis ve'y afternoon," exclaimed 'Lias, in relief and delight; "I's mighty fond o' fishin', myse'f."

"All right; I'm in your hands from now on."

'Lias drew his shoulders up, with an unconscious motion. The preacher saw it, and mentally rejoiced. He felt that the first thing the boy beside him needed was a consciousness of responsibility, and the lifted shoulders meant progress in that direction, a sort of physical straightening up to correspond with the moral one.

On seeing her son walk in with the minister, Aunt "Ca'-line's" delight was boundless. "La! Brothah Dokesbury," she exclaimed, "wha'd you fin' dat scamp?"

"Oh, down the street here," the young man replied lightly. "I got hold of his name and made myself acquainted, so he came home to go fishing with me."

"'Lias is pow'ful fon' o' fishin', hisse'f. I 'low he kin show you some mighty good places. Cain't you, 'Lias?"

"I reckon."

'Lias was thinking. He was distinctly grateful that the circumstances of his meeting with the minister had been so deftly passed over. But with a half idea of the superior moral responsibility under which a man in Dokesbury's position labored, he wondered vaguely — to put it in his own thought-words — "ef de preachah hadn't put' nigh lied." However, he was willing to forgive this little lapse of veracity, if such it was, out of consideration for the anxiety it spared his mother.

When Stephen Gray came in to dinner, he was no less pleased than his wife to note the terms of friendship on which the minister received his son. On his face was the first smile that Dokesbury had seen there, and he awakened from his taciturnity and proffered much information as to the fishing places thereabout. The young minister accounted this a distinct gain. Anything more than a frowning silence from the "little yaller man" was gain.

The fishing that afternoon was particularly good. Catfish, chubs, and suckers were landed in numbers sufficient to please the heart of any amateur angler.

'Lias was happy, and the minister was in the best of spirits, for his charge seemed promising. He looked on at the boy's jovial face, and laughed within himself; for, mused he, "it is so much harder for the devil to get into a cheerful heart than into a sullen, gloomy one." By the time they were ready to go home Howard Dokesbury had received a promise from 'Lias to attend service the next morning and hear the sermon.

There was a great jollification over the fish supper that night, and 'Lias and the minister were the heroes of the occasion. The old man again broke his silence, and recounted, with infinite dryness, ancient tales of his prowess with rod and line, while Aunt "Ca'line" told of famous fish suppers that in the bygone days she had cooked for "de white folks." In the midst of it all, however, 'Lias disappeared. No one had noticed when he slipped out, but all seemed to become

conscious of his absence about the same time. The talk shifted, and finally simmered into silence.

When the Rev. Mr. Dokesbury went to bed that night, his charge had not yet returned.

The young minister woke early on the Sabbath morning, and he may be forgiven that the prospect of the ordeal through which he had to pass drove his care for 'Lias out of mind for the first few hours. But as he walked to church, flanked on one side by Aunt Caroline in the stiffest of ginghams and on the other by her husband stately in the magnificence of an antiquated "Jim-swing," his mind went back to the boy with sorrow. Where was he? What was he doing? Had the fear of a dull church service frightened him back to his old habits and haunts? There was a new sadness at the preacher's heart as he threaded his way down the crowded church and ascended the rude pulpit.

The church was stiflingly hot, and the morning sun still beat relentlessly in through the plain windows. The seats were rude wooden benches, in some instances without backs. To the right, filling the inner corner, sat the pillars of the church, stern, grim, and critical. Opposite them, and, like them, in seats at right angles to the main body, sat the older sisters, some of them dressed with good old-fashioned simplicity, while others yielding to newer tendencies were gotten up in gaudy attempts at finery. In the rear seats a dozen or so much beribboned mulatto girls tittered and giggled, and cast bold glances at the minister.

The young man sighed as he placed the manuscript of his sermon between the leaves of the tattered Bible. "And this is Mt. Hope," he was again saying to himself.

It was after the prayer and in the midst of the second hymn that a more pronounced titter from the back seats drew his attention. He raised his head to cast a reproving glance at the irreverent, but the sight that met his eyes turned that look into one of horror. 'Lias had just entered

the church, and with every mark of beastly intoxication was staggering up the aisle to a seat, into which he tumbled in a drunken heap. The preacher's soul turned sick within him, and his eyes sought the face of the mother and father. The old woman was wiping her eyes, and the old man sat with his gaze bent upon the floor, lines of sorrow drawn about his wrinkled mouth.

All of a sudden a great revulsion of feeling came over Dokesbury. Trembling he rose and opened the Bible. There lay his sermon, polished and perfected. The opening lines seemed to him like glints from a bright cold crystal. What had he to say to these people, when the full realization of human sorrow and care and of human degradation had just come to him? What had they to do with firstlies and secondlies, with premises and conclusions? What they wanted was a strong hand to help them over the hard places of life and a loud voice to cheer them through the dark. He closed the book again upon his precious sermon. A something new had been born in his heart. He let his glance rest for another instant on the mother's pained face and the father's bowed form, and then turning to the congregation began, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me: for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls." Out of the fullness of his heart he spoke unto them. Their great need informed his utterance. He forgot his carefully turned sentences and perfectly rounded periods. He forgot all save that here was the well-being of a community put into his hands whose real condition he had not even suspected until now. The situation wrought him up. His words went forth like winged fire, and the emotional people were moved beyond control. They shouted, and clapped their hands, and praised the Lord loudly.

When the service was over, there was much gathering

about the young preacher, and handshaking. Through all 'Lias had slept. His mother started toward him; but the minister managed to whisper to her, "Leave him to me." When the congregation had passed out, Dokesbury shook 'Lias. The boy woke, partially sobered, and his face fell before the preacher's eyes.

"Come, my boy, let's go home." Arm in arm they went out into the street, where a number of scoffers had gathered to have a laugh at the abashed boy; but Howard Dokesbury's strong arm steadied his steps, and something in his face checked the crowd's hilarity. Silently they cleared the way, and the two passed among them and went home.

The minister saw clearly the things which he had to combat in his community, and through this one victim he determined to fight the general evil. The people with whom he had to deal were children who must be led by the hand. The boy lying in drunken sleep upon his bed was no worse than the rest of them. He was an epitome of the evil, as his parents were of the sorrows, of the place.

He could not talk to Elias. He could not lecture him. He would only be dashing his words against the accumulated evil of years of bondage as the ripples of a summer sea beat against a stone wall. It was not the wickedness of this boy he was fighting or even the wrongdoing of Mt. Hope. It was the aggregation of the evils of the fathers, the grandfathers, the masters and mistresses of these people. Against this what could talk avail?

The boy slept on, and the afternoon passed heavily away. Aunt Caroline was finding solace in her pipe, and Stephen Gray sulked in moody silence beside the hearth. Neither of them joined their guest at evening service.

He went, however. It was hard to face those people again after the events of the morning. He could feel them covertly nudging each other and grinning as he went up to the pulpit. He chided himself for the momentary annoyance it caused

him. Were they not like so many naughty, irresponsible children?

The service passed without unpleasantness, save that he went home with an annoyingly vivid impression of a yellow girl with red ribbons on her hat, who pretended to be impressed by his sermon and made eyes at him from behind her handkerchief.

On the way to his room that night, as he passed Stephen Gray, the old man whispered huskily, "It's de fus' time 'Lias evah done dat."

It was the only word he had spoken since morning.

A sound sleep refreshed Dokesbury, and restored the tone to his overtaxed nerves. When he came out in the morning, Elias was already in the kitchen. He too had slept off his indisposition, but it had been succeeded by a painful embarrassment that proved an effectual barrier to all intercourse with him. The minister talked lightly and amusingly, but the boy never raised his eyes from his plate, and only spoke when he was compelled to answer some direct questions.

Howard Dokesbury knew that unless he could overcome this reserve, his power over the youth was gone. He bent every effort to do it.

"What do you say to a turn down the street with me?" he asked as he rose from breakfast.

'Lias shook his head.

"What! You haven't deserted me already?"

The older people had gone out, but young Gray looked furtively about before he replied: "You know I ain't fittin' to go out with you — aftah — aftah — yestiddy."

A dozen appropriate texts rose in the preacher's mind, but he knew that it was not a preaching time, so he contented himself with saying —

"Oh, get out! Come along!"

"No, I cain't. I cain't. I wisht I could! You needn't

think I's ashamed, 'cause I ain't. Plenty of 'em git drunk, an' I don't keer nothin' 'bout dat" — this in a defiant tone.

"Well, why not come along then?"

"I tell you I cain't. Don't ax me no mo'. It ain't on my account I won't go. It's you."

"Me! Why, I want you to go."

"I know you does, but I mustn't. Cain't you see that dey'd be glad to say dat — dat you was in cahoots wif me an' you tuk yo' dram on de sly?"

"I don't care what they say so long as it isn't true. Are you coming?"

"No, I ain't."

He was perfectly determined, and Dokesbury saw that there was no use arguing with him. So with a resigned "All right!" he strode out the gate and up the street, thinking of the problem he had to solve.

There was good in Elias Gray, he knew. It was a shame that it should be lost. It would be lost unless he were drawn strongly away from the paths he was treading. But how could it be done? Was there no point in his mind that could be reached by what was other than evil? That was the thing to be found out. Then he paused to ask himself if, after all, he were not trying to do too much — trying, in fact, to play Providence to Elias. He found himself involuntarily wanting to shift the responsibility of planning for the youth. He wished that something entirely independent of his intentions would happen.

Just then something did happen. A piece of soft mud hurled from some unknown source caught the minister square in the chest, and spattered over his clothes. He raised his eyes and glanced about quickly, but no one was in sight. Whoever the foe was, he was securely ambushed.

"Thrown by the hand of a man," mused Dokesbury, "prompted by the malice of a child."

He went on his way, finished his business, and returned to the house.

"La, Brothah Dokesbury!" exclaimed Aunt Caroline, "what's de mattah 'f you' shu't bosom?"

"Oh, that's where one of our good citizens left his card."

"You don' mean to say none o' dem low-life scoun'els —"

"I don't know who did it. He took particular pains to keep out of sight."

"'Lias!" the old woman cried, turning on her son, "wha' 'd you let Brothah Dokesbury go off by hisse'f fu? Why n't you go 'long an' tek keer o' him?"

The old lady stopped even in the midst of her tirade, as her eyes took in the expression on her son's face.

"I'll kill some o' dem damn —"

"'Lias!"

"'Scuse me, Mistah Dokesbury, but I feel lak I'll bus' ef I don't 'spress myse'f. It makes me so mad. Don't you go out o' hyeah no mo' 'dout me. I'll go 'long an' I'll brek somebody's haid wif a stone."

"'Lias! how you talkin' fo' de ministah?"

"Well, dat's whut I'll do, 'cause I kin outth'ow any of 'em an' I know dey hidin'-places."

"I'll be glad to accept your protection," said Dokesbury.

He saw his advantage, and was thankful for the mud — the one thing that without an effort restored the easy relations between himself and his protégé.

Ostensibly these relations were reversed, and Elias went out with the preacher as a guardian and protector. But the minister was laying his nets. It was on one of these rambles that he broached to 'Lias a subject which he had been considering for some time.

"Look here, 'Lias," he said, "what are you going to do with that big back yard of yours?"

"Oh, nothin'. 'Tain't no 'count to raise nothin' in."

" It may not be fit for vegetables, but it will raise something."

" What? "

" Chickens. That's what."

Elias laughed sympathetically.

" I'd lak to eat de chickens I raise. I wouldn't want to be feedin' de neighborhood."

" Plenty of boards, slats, wire, and a good lock and key would fix that all right."

" Yes, but whah 'm I gwine to git all dem things? "

" Why, I'll go in with you and furnish the money, and help you build the coops. Then you can sell chickens and eggs, and we'll go halves on the profits."

" Hush man! " cried 'Lias, in delight.

So the matter was settled, and, as Aunt Caroline expressed it, " Fu' a week er sich a mattah, you nevah did see sich ta'in' down an' buildin' up in all yo' bo'n days."

'Lias went at the work with zest and Dokesbury noticed his skill with tools. He let fall the remark: " Say, 'Lias, there's a school near here where they teach carpentry; why don't you go and learn? "

" What I gwine to do with bein' a cyahpenter? "

" Repair some of these houses around Mt. Hope, if nothin' more," Dokesbury responded, laughing; and there the matter rested.

The work prospered, and as the weeks went on, 'Lias's enterprise became the town's talk. One of Aunt Caroline's patrons who had come with some orders about work regarded the changed condition of affairs, and said, " Why, Aunt Caroline, this doesn't look like the same place. I'll have to buy some eggs from you; you keep your yard and henhouse so nice, it's an advertisement for the eggs."

" Don't talk to me nothin' 'bout dat ya'd, Miss Lucy," Aunt Caroline had retorted. " Dat 'long to 'Lias an' de

preachah. Hit dey doin's. Dey done mos' nigh drove me out wif dey cleanness. I ain't nevah seed no sich ca'in' on in my life befo'. Why, my 'Lias done got right brigity an' talk about bein' somep'n."

Dokesbury had retired from his partnership with the boy save in so far as he acted as a general supervisor. His share had been sold to a friend of 'Lias, Jim Hughes. The two seemed to have no other thought save of raising, tending, and selling chickens.

Mt. Hope looked on and ceased to scoff. Money is a great dignifier, and Jim and 'Lias were making money. There had been some sniffs when the latter had hinged the front gate and whitewashed his mother's cabin, but even that had been accepted now as a matter of course.

Dokesbury had done his work. He, too, looked on, and in some satisfaction.

"Let the leaven work," he said, "and all Mt. Hope must rise."

It was one day, nearly a year later, that "old lady Hughes" dropped in on Aunt Caroline for a chat.

"Well, I do say, Sis' Ca'line, dem two boys o' oun done sot dis town on fiah."

"What now, Sis' Lizy?"

"Why, evah sence 'Lias tuk it into his haid to be a cyah-penter an' Jim 'cided to go 'long an' lu'n to be a blacksmiff, some o' dese hyeah othah young people's been trying to do somep'n'."

"All dey wanted was a staht."

"Well, now will you b'lieve me, dat no-'count Tom Johnson done opened a fish sto', an' he has de boys an' men bring him dey fish all de time. He gives 'em a little somep'n fu' dey ketch, den he go sell 'em to de white folks."

"Lawd, how long!"

"An' what you think he say?"

"I do' know, sis'."

"He say ez soon 'z he git money enough, he gwine to dat school whah 'Lias and Jim gone an' lu'n to fahm scientific."

"Bless de Lawd! Well, 'um, I don' put nothin' pas' de young folks now."

Mt. Hope had at last awakened. Something had come to her to which she might aspire — something that she could understand and reach. She was not soaring, but she was rising above the degradation in which Howard Dokesbury had found her. And for her and him the ordeal had passed.

* * *

The Negro race in America has produced many musicians, composers, and painters, but Paul Laurence Dunbar was the first to achieve fame in literature. He was of pure African stock ; his father and mother were born in slavery and neither had any schooling, although the father had taught himself to read. Paul was born in Dayton, Ohio, June 27, 1872. He was christened Paul, because his father said that he was to be a great man. At school he was a diligent pupil, and he began to make verses when he was still a child. His ability being recognized by his classmates, he was made editor of the high school paper, and he also wrote the class song for his commencement.

The death of his father made it necessary for him to support his mother. He sought for some employment where his education might be put to some use, but finding such opportunities closed to him, he became an elevator boy. Paul continued to write, however, and in 1892 his first volume was published, a book of poems called *Oak and Ivy*. The publishers were so doubtful of its success that they would not bring it out until a friend advanced the cost of publication. Paul then sold books to the passengers in his elevator and realized enough to repay his friend. In a letter written about this time he tells of his ambitions: "I did once want to be a lawyer, but that ambition has long since

died out before the all-absorbing desire to be a worthy singer of the songs of God and nature:— to be able to interpret my own people through song and story, and to prove to the many that we are more human than African."

Gifted though he was, fame came very slowly to Mr. Dunbar. The Negro always has an uphill row to hoe. Finally, however, recognition did come; his *Lyrics of Lowly Life* was published and highly praised by the critics. He went to England to give a series of readings, and was later given a post in the Congressional Library at Washington so that he would have time and opportunity for study. His health began to fail, however, and although he went to Colorado to try that bracing climate, he grew steadily worse and died at his old home in Dayton, Ohio, in 1906. In spite of ill health he had managed to complete several volumes of prose and poetry and to charm many an audience with his musical reading of poetry. Brand Whitlock said of him that he did for his own people what Burns did for the peasants of Scotland— he expressed them in their own way and in their own words.

In the Lumber Country

So far in this book, you have read stories about various types of struggle—the struggle against poverty, sickness, fear, loneliness, and other enemies of man. There is another kind of struggle, however—that against nature. In the early pioneering days man often lost in the battle. Now, with hard-won knowledge, he has tamed the wilderness and learned to ride the river, but the great primeval forests are still no place for weaklings. The American lumberman is rough, frank, independent, humorous, always ready for a fight. In the following sketch, taken from Blazed Trail Stories, Stewart Edward White shows the lumberman at work and at play.

THE RIVERMAN

by STEWART EDWARD WHITE

I first met him one Fourth of July afternoon in the middle eighties. The sawdust streets and high board sidewalks of the lumber town were filled to the brim with people. The permanent population, dressed in the stiffness of its Sunday best, escorted gingham wives or sweethearts; a dozen outsiders like myself tried not to be too conspicuous in a city smartness; but the great multitude was composed of the men of the woods. I sat, chair-tilted by the hotel, watching them pass. Their heavy woolen shirts crossed by the broad suspenders, the red of their sashes or leather shine of their belts, their short kersey trousers "stagged" off to leave a gap between the knee and the heavily spiked "cork boots" — all these were distinctive enough of their class, but most interesting to me were the eyes that peered from beneath their little round hats tilted rakishly askew. They were all subtly alike, those eyes. Some were black, some were brown, or gray, or blue, but all were steady and unabashed, all looked straight at you with a strange humorous blending of aggression and respect for your own business, and all without exception wrinkled at the corners with a suggestion of dry humor. In my half-conscious scrutiny I probably stared harder than I knew, for all at once a laughing pair of blue eyes suddenly met mine full, and an ironical voice drawled,

"Say, bub, you look as interested as a man killing snakes. Am I your long-lost friend?"

The tone of the voice matched accurately the attitude of the man, and that was quite noncommittal. He stood cheerfully ready to meet the emergency. If I sought trouble, it was here to my hand; or if I needed help he was willing to offer it.

"I guess you are," I replied, "if you can tell me what all this outfit's headed for."

He thrust back his hat and ran his hand through a mop of closely cropped light curls.

"Birling match," he explained briefly. "Come on."

I joined him, and together we followed the crowd to the river, where we roosted like cormorants on adjacent piles overlooking a patch of clear water among filled booms.

"Drive just over," my new friend informed me. "Rear come down last night. Fourth July celebration. This little town will scratch fer th' tall timber along about midnight when the boys goes in to take her apart."

A half dozen men with peaveys rolled a white-pine log of about a foot and a half in diameter into the clear water, where it lay rocking back and forth, three or four feet from the boom piles. Suddenly a man ran the length of the boom, leaped easily into the air, and landed with both feet square on one end of the floating log. That end disappeared in an ankle-deep swirl of white foam, the other rose suddenly, the whole timber, projected forward by the shock, drove headlong to the middle of the little pond. And the man, his arms folded, his knees just bent in the graceful nervous attitude of the circus rider, stood upright like a statue of bronze.

A roar approved this feat.

"That's Dickey Darrell," said my informant, "Roaring Dick. He's hell *and* repeat. Watch him."

The man on the log was small, with clean beautiful haunches and shoulders, but with hanging baboon arms. Perhaps his most striking feature was a mop of reddish-

brown hair that overshadowed a little triangular white face accented by two reddish-brown quadrilaterals that served as eyebrows and a pair of inscrutable chipmunk eyes.

For a moment he poised erect in the great calm of the public performer. Then slowly he began to revolve the log under his feet. The lofty gaze, the folded arms, the straight supple waist budged not by a hair's breadth; only the feet stepped forward, at first deliberately, then faster and faster, until the rolling log threw a blue spray a foot into the air. Then suddenly *slap! slap!* the heavy caulks stamped a reversal. The log came instantaneously to rest, quivering exactly like some animal that had been spurred through its paces.

“Magnificent!” I cried.

“Hell, that's nothing!” my companion repressed me, “anybody can birl a log. Watch this.”

Roaring Dick for the first time unfolded his arms. With some appearance of caution he balanced his unstable footing into absolute immobility. Then he turned a somersault.

This was the real thing. My friend uttered a wild yell of applause which was lost in a general roar.

A long pike pole shot out, bit the end of the timber, and towed it to the boom pile. Another man stepped on the log with Darrell. They stood facing each other, bent-kneed, alert. Suddenly with one accord they commenced to birl the log from left to right. The pace grew hot. Like squirrels treading a cage their feet twinkled. Then it became apparent that Darrell's opponent was gradually being forced from the top of the log. He could not keep up. Little by little, still moving desperately, he dropped back to the slant, then at last to the edge, and so off into the river with a mighty splash.

“Clean birled!” commented my friend.

One after another a half-dozen rivermen tackled the imperturbable Dick, but none of them possessed the agility to

stay on top in the pace he set them. One boy of eighteen seemed for a moment to hold his own, and managed at least to keep out of the water even when Darrell had apparently reached his maximum speed. But that expert merely threw his entire weight into two reversing stamps of his feet, and the young fellow dove forward as abruptly as though he had been shied over a horse's head.

The crowd was by now getting uproarious and impatient of volunteer effort to humble Darrell's challenge. It wanted the best, and at once. It began, with increasing insistence, to shout a name.

"Jimmy Powers!" it vociferated, "Jimmy Powers!"

And then by shamefaced bashfulness, by profane protest, by muttered and comprehensive curses I knew that my companion on the other pile was indicated.

A dozen men near at hand began to shout. "Here he is!" they cried. "Come on, Jimmy." "Don't be a high banker." "Hang his hide on the fence."

Jimmy, still red and swearing, suffered himself to be pulled from his elevation and disappeared in the throng. A moment later I caught his head and shoulders pushing toward the boom piles, and so in a moment he stepped warily aboard to face his antagonist.

This was evidently no question to be determined by the simplicity of force or the simplicity of a child's trick. The two men stood half-crouched, face to face, watching each other narrowly, but making no move. To me they seemed like two wrestlers sparring for an opening. Slowly the log revolved one way; then slowly the other. It was a mere courtesy of salute. All at once Dick birled three rapid strokes from left to right as though about to roll the log, leaped into the air and landed square with both feet on the other slant of the timber. Jimmy Powers felt the jar, and acknowledged it by a spasmodic jerk with which he counterbalanced Darrell's weight. But he was not thrown.

As though this daring and hazardous maneuver had opened the combat, both men sprang to life. Sometimes the log rolled one way, sometimes the other, sometimes it jerked from side to side like a crazy thing, but always with the rapidity of light, always in a smother of spray and foam. The decided *spat, spat, spat* of the reversing blows from the caulked boots sounded like picket firing. I could not make out the different leads, feints, parries, and counters of this strange method of boxing, nor could I distinguish to whose initiative the various evolutions of that log could be ascribed. But I retain still a vivid mental picture of two men nearly motionless above the waist, nearly vibrant below it, dominating the insane gyrations of a stick of pine.

The crowd was appreciative and partisan — for Jimmy Powers. It howled wildly, and rose thereby to even higher excitement. Then it forgot its manners utterly and groaned when it made out that a sudden splash represented its favorite, while the indomitable Darrell still trod the quarter-deck as champion birler for the year.

I must confess I was as sorry as anybody. I climbed down from my cormorant roost, and picked my way between the alleys of aromatic piled lumber in order to avoid the press, and cursed the little gods heartily for undue partiality in the wrong direction. In this manner I happened on Jimmy Powers himself seated dripping on a board and examining his bare foot.

“I’m sorry,” said I behind him. “How did he do it?”

He whirled, and I could see that his laughing boyish face had become suddenly grim and stern, and that his eyes were shot with blood.

“Oh, it’s you, is it?” he growled disparagingly. “Well, that’s how he did it.”

He held out his foot. Across the instep and at the base of the toes ran two rows of tiny round punctures from which the blood was oozing. I looked very inquiring.

"He corked me!" Jimmy Powers explained. "Jammed his spikes into me! Stepped on my foot and tripped me, the—" Jimmy Powers certainly could swear.

"Why didn't you make a kick?" I cried.

"That ain't how I do it," he muttered, pulling on his heavy woolen sock.

"But no," I insisted, my indignation mounting. "It's an outrage! That crowd was with you. All you had to do was to say something—"

He cut me short. "And give myself away as a damn fool — sure Mike. I ought to know Dickey Darrell by this time, and I ought to be big enough to take care of myself." He stamped his foot into his driver's shoe and took me by the arm, his good humor apparently restored. "No, don't lose any hair, bub; I'll get even with Roaring Dick."

That night, having by the advice of the proprietor moved my bureau and trunk against the bedroom door, I lay wide awake listening to the taking of the town apart. At each especially vicious crash I wondered if that might be Jimmy Powers getting even with Roaring Dick.

The following year, but earlier in the season, I again visited my little lumber town. In striking contrast to the life of that other midsummer day were the deserted streets. The landlord knew me, and after I had washed and eaten approached me with a suggestion.

"You got all day in front of you," said he; "why don't you take a horse and buggy and make a visit to the big jam? Everybody's up there more or less."

In response to my inquiry, he replied:

"They've jammed at the upper bend, jammed bad. The crew's been picking at her for near a week now, and last night Darrell was down to see about some more dynamite. It's worth seein'. The breast of her is near thirty feet high, and lots of water in the river."

"Darrell?" said I, catching at the name.

"Yes. He's rear boss this year. Do you think you'd like to take a look at her?"

"I think I should," I assented.

The horse and I jogged slowly along a deep sand road, through wastes of pine stumps and belts of hardwood beautiful with the early spring, until finally we arrived at a clearing in which stood two huge tents, a mammoth kettle slung over a fire of logs, and drying racks about the timbers of another fire. A fat cook in the inevitable battered derby hat, two bare-armed cookees, and a chore "boy" of seventy-odd summers were the only human beings in sight. One of the cookees agreed to keep an eye on my horse. I picked my way down a well-worn trail toward the regular *clank, clank, click* of the peaveys.

I emerged finally to a plateau elevated some fifty or sixty feet above the river. A half dozen spectators were already gathered. Among them I could not but notice a tall, spare, broad-shouldered young fellow dressed in a quiet business suit, somewhat wrinkled, whose square, strong, clean-cut face and muscular hands were tanned by the weather to a dark umber-brown. In another moment I looked down on the jam.

The breast, as my landlord had told me, rose sheer from the water to the height of at least twenty-five feet, bristling and formidable. Back of it pressed the volume of logs packed closely in an apparently inextricable tangle as far as the eye could reach. A man near informed me that the tail was a good three miles upstream. From beneath this wonderful *chevaux de frise* foamed the current of the river, irresistible to any force less mighty than the statics of such a mass.

A crew of forty or fifty men were at work. They clamped their peaveys to the reluctant timbers, heaved, pushed, slid, and rolled them one by one into the current, where they were caught and borne away. They had been doing this for a

week. As yet their efforts had made but slight impression on the bulk of the jam, but sometime, with patience, they would reach the key logs. Then the tangle would melt like sugar in the freshet, and these imperturbable workers would have to escape suddenly over the plunging logs to shore.

My eye ranged over the men, and finally rested on Dickey Darrell. He was standing on the slanting end of an up-heaved log dominating the scene. His little triangular face with the accents of the quadrilateral eyebrows was pale with the blaze of his energy, and his chipmunk eyes seemed to flame with a dynamic vehemence that caused those on whom they fell to jump as though they had been touched with a hot poker. I had heard more of Dickey Darrell since my last visit, and was glad of the chance to observe Morrison & Daly's best "driver" at work.

The jam seemed on the very edge of breaking. After half an hour's strained expectation it seemed still on the very edge of breaking. So I sat down on a stump. Then for the first time I noticed another acquaintance, handling his peavey near the very person of the rear boss.

"Hullo," said I to myself, "that's funny. I wonder if Jimmy Powers got even; and if so, why he is working so amicably and so near Roaring Dick."

At noon the men came ashore for dinner. I paid a quarter into the cook's private exchequer and so was fed. After the meal I approached my acquaintance of the year before.

"Hello, Powers," I greeted him, "I suppose you don't remember me?"

"Sure," he responded heartily. "Ain't you a little early this year?"

"No," I disclaimed, "this is a better sight than a birling match."

I offered him a cigar, which he immediately substituted for his corncob pipe. We sat at the root of a tree.

"It'll be a great sight when that jam pulls," said I.

"You bet," he replied, "but she's a teaser. Even old Tim Shearer would have a picnic to make out just where the key logs are. We've started her three times, but she's plugged tight every trip. Likely to pull almost any time."

We discussed various topics. Finally I ventured:

"I see your old friend Darrell is rear boss."

"Yes," said Jimmy Powers, dryly.

"By the way, did you fellows ever square up on that birling match?"

"No," said Jimmy Powers; then after an instant, "not yet."

I glanced at him to recognize the square set to the jaw that had impressed me so formidably the year before. And again his face relaxed almost quizzically as he caught sight of mine.

"Bub," said he, getting to his feet, "those little marks are on my foot yet. And just you tie into one idea: Dickey Darrell's got it coming." His face darkened with a swift anger, and he spoke a terrible oath deliberately. It was no mere profanity. It was an imprecation, and in its very deliberation I glimpsed the flare of an undying hate.

About three o'clock that afternoon Jimmy's prediction was fulfilled. Without the slightest warning the jam "pulled." Usually certain premonitory *cracks*, certain sinkings down, groanings forward, grumblings, shruggings, and sullen, reluctant shiftings of the logs give opportunity for the men to assure their safety. This jam, after inexplicably hanging fire for a week, as inexplicably started, like a sprinter, almost into its full gait. The first few tiers toppled smash into the current, raising a waterspout like that made by a dynamite explosion; the mass behind plunged forward blindly, rising and falling as the integral logs were up-ended, turned over, thrust one side, or forced bodily into the air by the mighty power playing jackstraws with them.

The rivermen, though caught unaware, reached either

bank. They held their peaveys across their bodies as balancing-poles, and zigzagged ashore with a calmness and lack of haste that were in reality only an indication of the keenness with which they fore-estimated each chance. Long experience with the ways of saw logs brought them out. They knew the correlation of these many forces just as the expert billiard player knows instinctively the various angles of incident and reflection between his cue ball and its mark. Consequently they avoided the centers of eruption, paused on the spots steadied for the moment, dodged moving logs, trod those not yet under way, and so arrived on solid ground. The jam itself started with every indication of meaning business, gained momentum for a hundred feet, and then plugged to a standstill. The "break" was abortive.

Now we all had leisure to notice two things. First, the movement had not been of the whole jam, as we had at first supposed, but only of a block or section of it twenty rods or so in extent. Thus between the part that had moved and the greater bulk that had not stirred lay a hundred feet of open water in which floated a number of loose logs. The second fact was, that Dickey Darrell had fallen into that open stretch of water and was in the act of swimming toward one of the floating logs. That much we were given time to appreciate thoroughly. Then the other section of the jam rumbled and began to break. Roaring Dick was caught between two gigantic millstones moving to crush him out of sight.

An active figure darted down the tail of the first section, out over the floating logs, seized Darrell by the coat collar, and so burdened began desperately to scale the very face of the breaking jam.

Never was a more magnificent rescue. The logs were rolling, falling, diving against the laden man. He climbed as over a treadmill, a treadmill whose speed was constantly increasing. And when he finally gained the top, it was as

the gap closed splintering beneath him and the man he had saved.

It is not in the woodsman to be demonstrative at any time, but here was work demanding attention. Without a pause for breath or congratulation they turned to the necessity of the moment. The jam, the whole jam, was moving at last. Jimmy Powers ran ashore for his peavey. Roaring Dick, like a demon incarnate, threw himself into the work. Forty men attacked the jam in a dozen places, encouraging the movement, twisting aside the timbers that threatened to lock anew, directing pygmylike the titanic forces into the channel of their efficiency. Roaring like wild cattle the logs swept by, at first slowly, then with the railroad rush of the curbed freshet. Men were everywhere, taking chances, like cowboys before the stampeded herd. And so, out of sight around the lower bend swept the front of the jam in a swirl of glory, the rivermen riding the great boom back of the creature they subdued, until at last, with the slackening current, the logs floated by free, cannoning with hollow sound one against the other. A half dozen watchers, leaning statuesquely on the shafts of their peaveys, watched the ordered ranks pass by.

One by one the spectators departed. At last only myself and the brown-faced young man remained. He sat on a stump, staring with sightless eyes into vacancy. I did not disturb his thoughts.

The sun dipped. A cool breeze of evening sucked up the river. Over near the cook-camp a big fire commenced to crackle by the drying frames. At dusk the rivermen straggled in from the down-river trail.

The brown-faced young man arose and went to meet them. I saw him return in close conversation with Jimmy Powers. Before they reached us he had turned away with a gesture of farewell.

Jimmy Powers stood looking after him long after his form

had disappeared, and indeed even after the sound of his wheels had died toward town. As I approached, the riverman turned to me a face from which the reckless, contained self-reliance of the woods-worker had faded. It was wide-eyed with an almost awe-stricken wonder and adoration.

"Do you know who that is?" he asked me in a hushed voice. "That's Thorpe, Harry Thorpe. And do you know what he said to me just now, *me*? He told me he wanted me to work in Camp One next winter, Thorpe's One. And he told me I was the first man he ever hired straight into One."

His breath caught with something like a sob.

I had heard of the man and his methods. I knew he had made it a practice of recruiting for his prize camp only from the employees of his other camps, that, as Jimmy said, he never "hired straight into One." I had heard, too, of his reputation among his own and other woodsmen. But this was the first time I had ever come into personal contact with his influence. It impressed me the more in that I had come to know Jimmy Powers and his kind.

"You deserve it, every bit," said I. "I'm not going to call you a hero, because that would make you tired. What you did this afternoon showed nerve. It was a brave act. But it was a better act because you rescued your enemy, because you forgot everything but your common humanity when danger —"

I broke off. Jimmy was again looking at me with his ironically quizzical grin.

"Bub," said he, "if you're going to hang any stars of Bethlehem on my Christmas tree, just call a halt right here. I didn't rescue that scalawag because I had any Christian sentiments, nary bit. I was just naturally savin' him for the birling match next Fourther July."



STEWART EDWARD WHITE was born in a small town near Grand Rapids, Michigan, March 12, 1873. His parents had their own ideas about bringing up children. Instead of sending him to school they sent for a teacher to instruct him; they encouraged him to read and they took him traveling, not only to cities, but to the silent places — to the great forests, and to the lumber camps. During four years spent in California he became a good horseman, making many trips in the saddle to the picturesque old ranches. He entered high school at sixteen and was graduated at eighteen, president of his class. His greatest pride was winning the five-mile running record of his school.

While he was taking a college course at the University of Michigan, he spent his vacations cruising about the Great Lakes in a twenty-eight-foot cutter sloop. After graduation he worked for a time in a packing house; then, hearing of the discovery of gold in the Black Hills, he set off with the other gold-seekers. He did not find a mine, but the experience gave him a background for two novels, *The Claim Jumpers* and *The Westerners*.

Mr. White's writing was never done in a warm, comfortable study. *The Blazed Trail*, for example, was written in a lumber camp in midwinter. He got up at four o'clock, wrote until eight, then put on his snowshoes and went out for a day's work. When the story was finished he gave it to the foreman of the camp to read. The man began it after supper; when White at four o'clock the next morning found him still reading, he felt that the book would succeed.

Once without warning, Mr. White went to Africa. His explanation was simple: "I went because I wanted to. About once in so often the wheels get rusty and I have to get up and do something real or else blow up. Africa seemed to me a pretty real thing." Several books grew out of his African trip. Mr. White also wrote several novels dealing with the romantic history of the state of California. The first of these books, *Gold*, describes the mad rush of the Forty-Niners on the first discovery of gold in California. *The Gray Dawn*, another of the series, tells of the days of the

Vigilantes, when the wild life of the mining camps slowly settled down to law and order. In the first World War Mr. White saw service in France as a major in the U. S. Field Artillery, an experience which added to his rich fund of story material.

Stewart Edward White can write after his name: Ph.B.; M.A.; Fellow of the Royal Society; and Member of the National Institute of Arts and Letters. One might therefore expect from him something very serious and scholarly; as a matter of fact, his stories are refreshingly simple and of timeless interest to all who love the out-of-doors and enjoy a good story for its own sake.

Tradition of the Sea

Every calling has its own traditions. Those hardy folk who follow the sea have a code that is stern and proud. Women and children first—that is the law at sea. When a ship goes down, the captain is always the last to leave. The nearest ship goes to the aid of one in danger, no matter how urgent its own errand. The sea, like the forest, is no place for weaklings; the title “Master Mariner” is the reward of patience, courage, skill, and loyalty. George W. Campbell tells us how Peter Jordahl achieved the honor, and you will probably think that there ought to have been some kind of medal for Hilda, too.

MASTER MARINER

by GEORGE W. CAMPBELL

I first knew Peter Jordahl when we sailed together in the freighter *Indiana*, a rusty, leaky three-thousand-ton vessel of the Red Anchor Line, on the New York-San Francisco run. I was a seaman at the time, but Peter was first mate — and he was the best one I'd ever seen. His billet in the *Indiana* didn't pay much for a man who had spent thirty years at sea, but he accepted it cheerfully and held on, while in his heart he nursed a great ambition; a dream that had sustained him in many a troublesome sea. Sometime — he told me this the first week I was aboard — his line would give him command, a ship of his own.

The earnestness in his voice, his grave tone of conviction, told you he never doubted its coming true. "Yes, sir!" he would say. "I'll be the master of a Red Anchor vessel one of these days. It'll be a good ship, able in every way." Peter wasn't boasting, it was simply that he had found his course, and he was sticking to it, following it to the very end.

Often, when I had the wheel watch, I saw him go to the rail and stand there for a long time gazing over the sea. But after a while he would turn around, his bronzed face smiling, a new light streaming from his tired blue eyes.

And then he'd pull out an old silver watch and fondly show the engraving on its heavy lid. "See! There's my seagoin' history carved as true as I'm tellin' you." Your éyes never strayed while his blunt finger pointed to the inscriptions.

Thin, time-worn letters that told of the long, hard years: "Third mate—1910." "Second mate—1914." "First mate—1919." That was his record, as enduring as the metal which told it. And trembling a bit, his finger would move on to the space that was left. "Just one more to make it complete. 'Master Mariner.' Yes, sir, it'll be there!"

You may have thought him odd in his frankness, but you didn't laugh and you didn't doubt, for you knew he was a *seaman* of the type that are all too few.

At last came the day. We were in Colón, waiting to transit the canal and head for the long journey to San Francisco, when the news arrived.

It was a letter from the Line's home office. Peter's face was deadly serious as he read it. Then he broke into a great chuckle. "My wife Hilda was right! She said I'd make it sure after this trip. And here it is!" He held the paper for all to see. "A ship of my own, men! Soon's we make Frisco I'm taking command of the *Queen State*. She's a fine vessel."

He couldn't say any more and he couldn't read it to us. He stood there, a little stunned, his heart brimful with gratitude. His eyes became wistfully moist, and when he found words he didn't thank the Line, the Fates or any man. It was his woman at home: "A woman always knows," he said. "She always does."

Then he was gone. He had to get a letter off to Hilda by air mail telling her to meet him at the dock with a new coat for himself; a coat with four gold stripes on each sleeve.

Perhaps Peter Jordahl was thinking of those new stripes that night off San Diego as we neared home; but it is more than likely he wasn't, for a dense fog hugged the ocean, making it a time for those on the bridge to keep alert. Peter kept his vigil in the starboard wing, his square jaw thrust ahead defiantly, while he listened for signals of other vessels groping their way through.

Suddenly the quietness of the swirling gloom was broken by a ship's whistle. *Whoo!* It came low and mournful.

Our skipper, Captain Bradley, had just stepped from his cabin. "D'you hear that, Mr. Jordahl?" he called.

"Aye," Peter returned. "She's about three points on our starboard bow, sir."

"Three points? Umm. Probably is," the skipper grudgingly admitted.

Whoo! It was louder. There was no way to tell what course the vessel was on. We only knew she was on our starboard hand and sounding one blast every two minutes, as required by law. She might be paralleling our course. If so, there was no danger. But if she were crossing our bow, she had the right of way; we would have to keep clear.

Those must have been Peter Jordahl's thoughts, because now he prudently commanded; "Stop!"

A seaman sprang to the engine-room annunciator. "Engine's stopped, sir!"

"Sound two blasts!" Jordahl commanded. That was the signal for a vessel under way, but about to stop. With the other vessel's whistle sounding nearer, Peter wasn't taking any chances. He never did, which explains why his record was clear. Strong and sure of himself. That was his way—but it wasn't the skipper's, and he showed it when he joined Peter in the wing.

"Mighty wet fog," he said. "Nasty stuff to navigate in."

"Soupy," was Peter's reply.

Whoo! Whoo!

"Say, Jordahl, she gave two blasts! She's stopped. She wants us to go ahead, get clear of her."

"Aye." Peter wasn't sure, and he waited.

"Well!" growled the captain.

"Ahead, two-thirds," Peter finally said.

The *Indiana* began forging ahead. For more than a min-

ute it was quiet — and then, close aboard, so near that its blast seemed on top of us, we heard the vessel's whistle. I glanced Peter's way. He was half leaning over the rail, his jaw thrust forward more than ever. He couldn't see beyond the bow, but he acted instinctively.

“Emergency, back full!” His command rolled firm, decisive.

“Backing full, sir!”

The *Indiana* shuddered as the power took hold. Then the glow of a red light broke through. It belonged to a ship, long, thin and wraithlike, rolling to the swell of the sea. She was crossing the *Indiana*'s bow! Her whistle blasted again, and just as her foc'sle was hidden by the *Indiana*'s high sheer, we heard the second blast. But it came from another ship close behind in column formation! Two navy destroyers!

“The fools!” Jordahl exploded. “Sounding off too close together. They're confusing.”

Captain Bradley came bounding into the pilot house. “Left rudder! Left, man, hard over!” he yelled. “Give it to her!”

I threw the wheel over faster than I ever had before. But Peter Jordahl saw the situation differently. The destroyer was crossing all right, but from obliquely ahead. The *Indiana* should come right! That way, both ships might shave by.

“Right, full rudder!” Jordahl countermanded.

The *Indiana* wavered to the new command, heeled, but she had gone too far left. We struck the leading destroyer aft. Steel against steel. The sickening crunch of grinding plates — mocking, bewildering noises.

And that's the way it was the night Peter Jordahl tried to save his record . . .

There were no deaths, not even a serious injury, but the navy brought suit for damages in the Federal Court in

San Francisco. Following that, the Red Anchor Line suspended Captain Bradley and Peter. And if you watched the skipper during the trial, you saw that he didn't care. He had his pile of cash, and he was ready to quit the sea. But to Peter it was a great defeat. He was done with the Red Anchor Line and all the rest, and he knew it. Only one thing might save him. The jury's verdict wasn't in, and if it was favorable — well, that might help some.

But even that feeble hope was blasted when the finding rolled out: "We find the defendant Red Anchor Line at fault. Damages for the amount of seventy-five thousand dollars are awarded."

Peter started to rise. Limply he fell back, the protest on his lips giving way to amazed silence. It was no use. He was through. But sticking to her man, never doubting him, was Hilda. She clutched his arm as we filed out of the courtroom.

"That's all right," she said. "You did right. You told the truth. I know you did."

Peter's stolid strength was gone, and in its place was a look of resignation as though he knew that his dream had been of thin stuff, as vaporous as the fog that ruined it. And he no longer wondered. He was through with the sea.

"Opinion counted for a lot in that court," I said. "The jury must have accepted the navy's opinions for facts."

Peter's weathered face tightened. "Of course the destroyer had the right of way. But that didn't give the navy the verdict. It was the manner in which the navy discredited me that did it."

And he was right, because the destroyer captain had ridiculed Peter by saying, "No alert officer could possibly mistake the signals: An experienced seaman's judgment would have told him there were two ships blowing their whistles and not just one."

"Alert," "experienced." Those were the words that made

Peter bitter. "You don't expect belittlin' treatment from the navy," he protested. "That ain't a seaman's way."

The seas of time have a way of sweeping a man along, and I often thought of Peter Jordahl and the command he had been denied. Then one day I was wandering along the water front at San Pedro. The seamen's strike was on and times were tough. There wasn't even the price of a cup of coffee in my pocket, and everybody I hit up was in the same fix. So I kept on walking, and finally I came to a wharf that berthed a tug.

The tide was low and only the tug's upper hamper showed, so I went closer to get a better look. She wasn't large, about four hundred tons, but there was something about her that told. Her stays were taut, her brightwork polished and her paint clean. She was trim and stanch.

I was looking at her name in gold letters — *Sea Raven* — when I heard the booming command, "Hello! Come aboard, lad. Come aboard!"

It was the old Peter Jordahl, strong and lusty. Even before he told me, I knew the *Sea Raven* was his.

"Yep, she's ours. Hilda's and mine," he said proudly, taking me into the pilothouse and pointing to the framed certificate of registry. "There's our names. We bought her at auction when the dredging company failed. Got her cheap. Only three thousand dollars!"

Only three thousand! I knew what his pay had been, and I wondered that he'd saved that much. I was still thinking about it when there came a flurry in the doorway. It was Hilda. She was drying her hands on her apron and a smile that was both tender and quizzical played around her mouth.

"Peter had to do something, Mr. Hale. You know, my man's not the kind to sit ashore. Besides, I always told him he'd have a ship of his own." Then, hurriedly, as if that ended the matter, "Come, dinner is ready."

Hilda was ship's cook, and she and Peter lived aboard in a tiny cracker box of a cabin forward of the galley. It was the only home they had, though the full truth of that fact did not dawn on me until later. An old fellow, Mr. MacDonald, was the engineer, and he spent most of his time tinkering over the *Sea Raven's* ancient reciprocating engine. He also tended the boiler, which was but a step from the throttle. On deck to handle lines was a chap named Bottle, a good hand who could loop a bollard with a line at twenty feet. That was the *Sea Raven's* crew until I came aboard.

A ship of his own! At last Peter Jordahl had it, although it had taken his last penny. He should have been happy, but he wasn't; and deep inside him you knew an old hurt still lingered. It came out one day as we rounded the Pedro breakwater and headed for the main ship channel.

I had the wheel, and Peter stood in the doorway and gazed at the great battleships of the battle fleet swinging at anchor on each side of us. They made the *Sea Raven* seem as if she were a tiny water bug that had crazily strayed into sacred waters. The battleships' decks were filled with sailors, but they barely looked at us. To them, the *Sea Raven* was only a spit-kit of a tug.

Peter called, "Give 'em a dip, Hilda. You better hold it until they see us salutin'." He watched while Hilda ran aft to the flagstaff to lower the colors in salute to each ship we passed.

"Do you always dip to these ships?" I asked. Peter nodded. "And do they always return it?"

"They do if they happen to see us," he replied gruffly. "But if I got a barge alongside, it makes it hard for 'em to see our stern." He became silent and it wasn't until after we passed the inner channel buoy that he spoke. "It ain't the same as if a big vessel were salutin' — a great passenger ship with gold braid on her bridge. That's the difference — but the *Sea Raven's* more able than they know."

His saying that was almost prophetic. We were returning from San Francisco about a week later with a tow of two barges behind us. The job wasn't paying much money, but that was all right, because Peter had bid low in order to get more business from the same contractor later on. Steady work was what he needed.

For two days we bucked heavy seas. The second night found us south of Point Arguello, the wind howling with gale force and the *Sea Raven* rolling and pitching her heart out. Every few minutes a green sea would leap aboard and bury the tug's blunt bow. Low, dirty-looking scud raced endlessly across the sky.

Looking at the sky and then at the barges sloshing along and yawning wildly, Peter shook his head apprehensively. "Quite a strain on the towline in this sea. But we'll make it. We've got to. This job means payin' off some charges against the *Sea Raven* or losin' her. That's all there is to it. I've got to get those barges through." And you knew he would.

With only three men besides himself, it had meant long, cruel hours for all of us. Bottle was down in the engine room, alternating with old Mac, while I stood watch and watch on the bridge with Peter. But Peter stood more tricks at the wheel than I did. That was his way.

I was below, catching some winks of sleep, when Hilda roused me. A lantern swung from the crook of her arm, and her oilskins dripped puddles of water. The thunder of sea against the *Sea Raven's* sides made her seem too frail to be there until I saw the firm set of her face.

"Peter needs you on the bridge," was all she said, leading the way.

After I gained the pilothouse, Peter said, "I sighted a red rocket over there on the port hand. Beyond is the shore line of Santa Rosa Island. Some poor devil's in distress. Take the glass and watch for another rocket."

In a few minutes another red flare lighted the heavens. "There it is!" I reported. "Any more ships around?"

"None. It's been a lonely watch. We're the only one to give a hand." Peter threw the wheel over and headed in the direction from which the rockets had come.

"How about the barges?"

"They're comin', lad. Comin'."

The *Sea Raven* was making heavier weather on the new course. Every timber in her groaned under the strain, and the throb of her engine came clear to the bridge. Peter was pushing her to the limit, as only an old seaman would when there are distress signals calling.

"We may be too late," I said. "Besides, it's probably nothing more than a fishing smack aground on Santa Rosa."

My protests didn't deter him. "We'll stand on, mister. We've seen the rockets."

A wind shift came. The waves rolled higher until the *Sea Raven* was making little headway.

"It's the tow," Hilda said. "The barges are too much with the wind and sea."

"Take the wheel, lad," Peter said crisply. Then he forced his way out the door and looked around. Another flare broke while he was gone.

There was a terribly drawn look on his face when he returned. For a long moment he looked at his woman and she looked at him. And in that quiet understanding you knew they would make the decision together as they always had.

Peter's voice never faltered. "We'll slip the tow."

Slip the cable! Cast the barges adrift this wild night!

"Just as you say, Peter," Hilda agreed. She picked up the lantern. "I'll go with you. You'll need a light."

Peter rang up "stop." It was settled now, and nothing could change him.

He came back to the bridge alone. "Bring her hard left,"

he said. I looked at him questioningly. "Hard left!" he repeated harshly. While the ship turned, he played the searchlight on the barges. "Bring her in closer — we've got a lee," he observed. He stood at the annunciator, signaling the engine room. Backing, filling, bringing the *Sea Raven* as gently as he could to the first barge's heaving side.

"Steady. Hold her up. There!" He glanced aft. "Hilda's goin' aboard the first barge." Peter tried to be casual about it. But the shock of his announcement told on me, and I showed it. "Mind your wheel! Leave this to me," he growled. "Hard left! Throw her stern in." Only a slight bump told when tug and barge met. It was a superb piece of seamanship. Then he was out of the pilot-house, yelling to Hilda. "Go aboard, Hilda. Quick!" He paused. Then he waved.

The *Sea Raven* was going ahead at her full speed. "It's all right," he said calmly. "We had to keep a light on the barges. There's other ships to consider. They might not see 'em without a light."

"But why Hilda? There's Bottle and me." I was angry.

"She wanted to go," was Peter's only explanation.

"A slim chance she's got," I retorted. "The drift is south toward Santa Barbara Island. A fine chance she'll have if the barges get in the breakers."

"We'll be back, lad. We'll be back."

The increased speed drove the *Sea Raven* ahead mercilessly, and she plunged into a succession of huge waves. Once, a sea of tidal force slammed its might full against us. Our bow dipped and green, frothy water smashed to the bridge. Trembling under the impact, the *Sea Raven* held there uncertainly. Then with great effort she staggered upward and shook off the sea.

"Too much speed," I complained.

"Not enough," Jordahl grumbled. He kept peering ahead, watching for another rocket.

After an hour had passed, Peter picked up the dim shore line of Santa Rosa Island with the searchlight. But not a vessel or a piece of wreckage was in sight.

Too late? I wondered.

And then our searchlight showed a yellow buoy about two hundred yards on the port bow. And while Peter held the light on it, we saw once more the familiar red glare showering into long streamers.

"Head for the buoy. Keep to leeward." Peter sprang to the annunciator.

We got alongside the buoy, and then we saw: "Submarine sunk here." There was also a handplate which read: "Telephone inside."

Our discovery didn't ruffle Peter a bit. "Go down and give Bottle a hand," he said. "Get a line on the buoy and heave her aboard. I'll hold the ship up to it."

We got the buoy aboard, the telephone out. It seemed hours before I shouted into the transmitter, "Hello! Hello!"

"Hello," came the sepulchral answer.

"The tug *Sea Raven* is standing by!" I shouted.

The phone clicked and I couldn't get an answer. But the words finally came. They were hollow, and they told of a futile battle. "*Sea Raven*, this is the captain—the *S-92*. Our engine room is flooded; can't raise the boat; water in after-battery compartment; chlorine gas thick."

I remembered the escape hatches I had read about; the artificial lungs submarine crews strapped on while they followed a buoy line to the surface. "You've an escape hatch and lungs, haven't you?"

"They're ready. How about the sea? Can you pick us up? We're about gone."

I told Peter. He looked at the sea gravely. "I can hold her here. They've got nothing to worry about. We'll stand right over 'em. You and Bottle stand by the heavin' lines —

life rings. Have their captain report the men to you as soon as they leave to come up. We're ready."

Bottle and I could heave the lines, drag the men aboard. But the hardest job was Peter Jordahl's. He would have to keep the *Sea Raven* fixed over the submarine so that once a man rose to the surface he wouldn't drift before we got a line to him. No man could last long in that sea.

"We're ready, *S-92*," I reported. "How long will it take you?"

"We're flooding the forward torpedo room now. Our men are in it, waiting for the sea pressure to build up the air pressure at the top of the compartment. Only a few minutes more. When the air pressure equals the sea pressure, we'll start up through the escape hatch . . . Four men are ready. Stand by."

The *Sea Raven* was rolling and pitching, but Peter kept her there. There was nothing to guide him except his sense of the way a ship "feels," but he had it.

"How's the strain on the buoy line?" he called.

"Steady."

Ahead, one-third; back, two-thirds; stop; ahead; full — the signals to the engine room were endless, but we rode into each mounting wave. Peter kept the position.

The first man's head broke the surface and his arms came up, reaching desperately for help. Bottle heaved a ring buoy tied to a line right to him. Bottle's ability to loop a bollard at twenty feet was all to the good. The man grabbed hold, and we pulled him in. He was choking, cold and unnerved.

"Th-thanks!" the sailor gasped and fell to the deck, exhausted. We wanted to take him inside, but there were others following — beaten, gasping men, blue and horribly shaken. But we got every man — thirty-eight in all . . .

And we got the barges, too. They were nearing the breakers that beat against Santa Barbara's stubborn cliffs before the towline was aboard. And after the barges were

in tow once more, their ugly bulks yawning and sloshing along to the *Sea Raven's* pull, Hilda turned to Peter and a beautiful smile lighted her face.

Her words came vibrantly: "You're a good man, Peter. And able. I've never doubted it. Never."

"Aye, Hilda, aye." There was a quiver that Peter couldn't hold back, for he was grateful, very thankful. His arm reached awkwardly around Hilda's shoulders as they sat on the worn leather seat in the pilothouse to watch the new day break.

The grim, gray battleships still swing at anchor in San Pedro harbor. They are proud ships, built on the traditions of noble things men have done at sea. But they share that tradition now with a spit-kit of a tugboat known as the *Sea Raven*. They watch for her, and when she comes puffing down the main ship channel with a quiet, solemn man on her bridge, the quartermasters of the watch all sing out, "It's the *Sea Raven*. Stand by for a dip!"

And sailors about the decks will crowd to the rail. They'll see Peter Jordahl, a great peace in his heart, step from the pilothouse and nod to Hilda. She'll dry her hands on her apron and run to the flagstaff. Then she'll dip the *Sea Raven's* colors in salute just as she has always done.

The battleships will return it, but with a snap, a show of respect that is given to important people, such as admirals.

A great command! Well, Peter Jordahl has it now. And he's got something else, too. It's a little medal the navy gave him which reads, "To Peter Jordahl, Master Mariner."



LIEUTENANT GEORGE W. CAMPBELL was born in Springfield, Illinois. He says of himself:

At fifteen I joined the army (the World War was on) and

at seventeen I was discharged. Then came the horrible disillusionment of having to go back to high school as a sophomore and finish. The old wanderlust shook me again, and when I was offered an appointment to the Naval Academy I took it. After the Naval Academy days were over I spent four years in the West Coast Fleet. Following that, I was in lighter-than-air for five years. That led to my first published piece, which the Post carried, "Five O'clock, Off California"—the story of the Macon disaster in 1935. Someday I hope to do a yarn on the hundred or more men I flew with who were killed in our dirigible tragedies.

After my airship days, I went to an aircraft tender and explored some islands in the south and western Pacific.

I did a tour of shore duty after that . . . then came destroyer duty. An injury from the Macon disaster took me to the hospital for the second time—and now I'm an East Coast sailor with the battle wagons.

Lieutenant Campbell's stories and articles have appeared in *Collier's*, *Cosmopolitan*, *Redbook*, *This Week*, and *The Saturday Evening Post*.

With the Police

Not all Americans are good citizens. For the lawbreakers, American born or otherwise, we need men to enforce the law. About twenty-five years ago, the Pennsylvania State Police became justly famous for their pioneer work in public safety. There was, however, no printed record of their service to guide other communities forming such groups. Miss Katherine Mayo studied their work at first hand, met the men of the force, visited the scenes of their activity, and in The Standard Bearers, told of their daring exploits. Since her book was written, in 1917, conditions and methods have changed a great deal, but the stories are true stories, well documented, and still have a real interest and importance.

ISRAEL DRAKE

by KATHERINE MAYO

Israel Drake was a bandit for simple love of the thing. To hunt for another reason would be a waste of time. The blood in his veins was pure English, unmixed since long ago. His environment was that of his neighbors. His habitat was the noble hills. But Israel Drake was a bandit, just as his neighbors were farmers — just as a hawk is a hawk while its neighbors are barnyard fowls.

Israel Drake was swarthy-visaged, high of cheek bone, with large, dark, deep-set eyes, and a thin-lipped mouth covered by a long and drooping black mustache. Barefooted, he stood six feet two inches tall. Lean as a panther, and as supple, he could clear a five-foot rail fence without the aid of his hand. He ran like a deer. As a woodsman the very deer could have taught him little. With rifle and revolver he was an expert shot, and the weapons he used were the truest and best.

All the hill-people of Cumberland County dreaded him. All the scattered valley-folk spoke softly at his name. And the jest and joy of Israel's carefree life was to make them skip and shiver and dance to the tune of their trepidations.

As a matter of fact, he was leader of a gang, outlaws every one. But his own strong aura eclipsed the rest, and he glared alone, in the thought of his world, endued with terrors of diverse origin.

His genius kept him fully aware of the value of this pre-

eminence, and it lay in his wisdom and pleasure to fan the flame of his own repute. In this it amused him to seek the picturesque — the unexpected. With an imagination fed by primeval humor and checked by no outward circumstances of law, he achieved a ready facility. Once, for example, while trundling through his town of Shippensburg on the rear platform of a freight train, he chanced to spy a Borough Constable crossing a bridge near the track.

“Happy thought! Let’s touch the good soul up. He’s getting stodgy.”

Israel drew a revolver and fired, neatly nicking the Constable’s hat. Then with a mountaineer’s hoot, he gayly proclaimed his identity.

Again, and many times, he would send into this or that town or settlement a message addressed to the Constable or Chief of Police: —

“I am coming down this afternoon. Get away out of town. Don’t let me find you there.”

Obediently they went away. And Israel, strolling the streets that afternoon just as he had promised to do, would enter shop after shop, look over the stock at his leisure, and, with perfect good humor, pick out whatever pleased him, regardless of cost.

“I think I’ll take this here article,” he would say to the trembling storekeeper, affably pocketing his choice.

“Help yourself, Mr. Drake! Help yourself, sir! Glad we are able to please you today.”

Which was indeed the truth. And many of them there were who would have hastened to curry favor with their persecutor by whispering in his ear a word of warning had they known of any impending attempt against him by the agents of peace.

Such was their estimate of the relative strength of Israel Drake and of the law forces of the Sovereign State of Pennsylvania.

In the earlier times they had tried to arrest him. Once the attempt succeeded and Israel went to the Penitentiary for a term. But he emerged a better and wilier bandit than before, to embark upon a career that made his former life seem tame. Sheriffs and constables now proved powerless against him, whatever they essayed.

Then came a grand, determined effort when the Sheriff, supported by fifteen deputies, all heavily armed, actually surrounded Drake's house. But the master-outlaw, alone and at ease at an upper window, his Winchester repeating-rifle in his hand and a smile of still content on his face, coolly stood the whole army off until, weary of empty danger, it gave up the siege and went home.

This disastrous expedition ended the attempts of the local authorities to capture Israel Drake. Thenceforth he pursued his natural course without pretense of let or hindrance. At the time when this story begins, no fewer than fourteen warrants were out for his apprehension, issued on charges ranging from burglary and highway robbery through a long list of felonies. But the warrants, slowly accumulating, lay in the bottom of official drawers, apprehending nothing but dust. No one undertook to serve them. Life was too sweet — too short.

Then came a turn of fate. Israel chanced to bethink himself of a certain aged farmer living with his old wife near a spot called Lee's Cross-Road. The two dwelt by themselves, without companions on their farm, and without neighbors. And they were reputed to have money.

The money might not be much — might be exceedingly little. But, even so, Israel could use it, and in any event there would be the fun of the trick. So Israel summoned one Carey Morrison, a gifted mate and subordinate, with whom he proceeded to act.

At dead of night the two broke into the farmhouse — crept into the chamber of the old pair — crept softly, softly,

lest the farmer might keep a shotgun by his side. Sneaking to the foot of the bed, Israel suddenly flashed his lantern full upon the pillows — upon the two pale, deep-seamed faces crowned with silver hair.

The woman sat up with a piercing scream. The farmer clutched at his gun. But Israel, bringing the glinting barrel of his revolver into the lantern's shaft of light, ordered both to lie down. Carey, slouching at hand, awaited orders.

"Where is your money?" demanded Israel, indicating the farmer by the point of his gun.

"I have no money, you coward!"

"It's no use your lying to me. *Where's the money?*"

"I have no money, I tell you."

"Carey," observed Israel, "hunt a candle."

While Carey looked for the candle, Israel surveyed his victims with a cheerful, anticipatory grin.

The candle came; was lighted.

"Carey," Israel spoke again, "you pin the old woman down. Pull the quilt off. Clamp her feet together. So!"

Then he thrust the candle-flame against the soles of those gnarled old feet — thrust it close, while the flame bent upward, and the melting tallow poured upon the bed.

The woman screamed again, this time in pain. The farmer half rose, with a quivering cry of rage, but Israel's gun stared him between the eyes. The woman screamed without interval. There was a smell of burning flesh.

"Now we'll change about," remarked Israel, beaming. "I'll hold the old feller. You take the candle, Carey. You don't reely need your gun — now, do ye, boy?"

And so they began afresh.

It was not a game to last long. Before dawn the two were back in their own place, bearing the little all of value that the rifled house had contained.

When the news of the matter spread abroad, it seemed, somehow, just a straw too much. The District Attorney of

the County of Cumberland blazed into white heat. But he was powerless, he found. Not an officer within his entire jurisdiction expressed any willingness even to attempt an arrest.

"Then we shall see," said District Attorney Rhey, "what the State will do for us, since we cannot help ourselves!" And he rushed off a telegram, confirmed by post, to the Superintendent of the Department of State Police.

The Superintendent of the Department of State Police promptly referred the matter to the Captain of "C" Troop, with orders to act. For Cumberland County, being within the southeastern quarter of the Commonwealth, lies under "C" Troop's special care.

It was Adams, in those days, who held that command — Lynn G. Adams, now Captain of "A" Troop, although for the duration of the war serving in the regular army, even as his fathers before him have served in our every war, including that which put the country on the map. Truer soldier, finer officer, braver or straighter or surer dealer with men and things need not be sought. His victories leave no needless scar behind, and his command would die by inches rather than fail him anywhere.

The Captain of "C" Troop, then, choosing with judgment, picked his man — picked Trooper Edward Hallisey, a Boston Irishman, square of jaw, shrewd of eye, quick of wit, strong of wind and limb. And he ordered Private Hallisey to proceed at once to Carlisle, county seat of Cumberland, and report to the District Attorney for service toward effecting the apprehension of Israel Drake.

Three days later — it was the 28th of September, to be exact — Private Edward Hallisey sent in his report to his Troop Commander. He had made all necessary observations, he said, and was ready to arrest the criminal. In this he would like to have the assistance of two Troopers, who should join him at Carlisle.

The report came in the morning mail. First Sergeant Price detailed two men from the Barracks reserve. They were Privates H. K. Merryfield and Harvey J. Smith. Their orders were simply to proceed at once, in civilian clothes, to Carlisle, where they would meet Private Hallisey and assist him in effecting the arrest of Israel Drake.

Privates Merryfield and Smith, carrying in addition to their service revolvers the 44-caliber Springfield carbine which is the Force's heavy weapon, left by the next train.

On the Carlisle station platform, as the two Troopers debarked, some hundred persons were gathered in pursuance of various and centrifugal designs. But one impulse they appeared unanimously to share—the impulse to give as wide a berth as possible to a peculiarly horrible tramp.

Why should a being like that intrude himself upon a passenger platform in a respectable country town? Not to board a coach, surely, for such as he pay no fares. To spy out the land? To steal luggage? Or simply to make himself hateful to decent folk?

He carried his head with a hangdog lurch—his heavy jaw was rough with stubble beard. His coat and trousers fluttered rags and his toes stuck out of his boots. Women snatched back their skirts as he slouched near, and men muttered and scowled at him for a contaminating beast.

Merryfield and Smith, drifting near this scum of the earth, caught the words "Four-thirty train" and the name of a station.

"Right," murmured Merryfield.

Then he went and bought tickets.

In the shelter of an ancient, grimy day coach, the scum muttered again, as Smith brushed past him in the aisle.

"Charlie Stover's farm," said he.

"M'm," said Smith.

At a scrap of a station, in the foothills of ascending heights the tramp and the Troopers separately detrained. In the

early evening all three strayed together once more in the shadow of the lilacs by Charlie Stover's gate.

Over the supper table Hallisey gave the news. "Drake is somewhere on the mountain tonight," said he. "His cabin is way up high, on a ridge called Huckleberry Patch. He is practically sure to go home in the course of the evening. Then is our chance. First, of course, you fellows will change your clothes. I've got some old things ready for you."

Farmer Stover, like every other denizen of the rural county, had lived for years in terror and hatred of Israel Drake. Willingly he had aided Hallisey to the full extent of his power. He had told all that he knew of the bandit's habits and mates. He had indicated the mountain trails, and he had given the Trooper such little shelter and food as the latter had stopped to take during his rapid work of investigation. But now he was asked to perform a service that he would gladly have refused; he was asked to hitch up a horse and wagon and to drive the three Troopers to the very vicinity of Israel Drake's house.

"Oh, come on, Mr. Stover," they urged. "You're a public-spirited man, as you've shown. Do it for your neighbors' sake if not for your own. You want the county rid of this pest."

Very reluctantly the farmer began the trip. With every turn of the ever-mounting forest road his reluctance grew. Grisly memories, grisly pictures, flooded his mind. It was night, and the trees in the darkness whispered like evil men. The bushes huddled like crouching figures. And what was it, moving stealthily over there, that crackled twigs? At last he could bear it no more.

"Here's where *I* turn 'round," he muttered hoarsely. "If you fellers are going farther you'll go alone. I got a use for *my* life!"

"All right, then," said Hallisey. "You've done well by us already. Good night."

It was a fine moonlight night and Hallisey now knew those woods as well as did his late host. He led his two comrades up another stiff mile of steady climbing. Then he struck off, by an almost invisible trail, into the dense timber. Silently the three men moved, threading the fragrant, silver-flecked blackness with practiced woodsmen's skill. At last their file-leader stopped and beckoned his mates.

Over his shoulder the two studied the scene before them: a clearing chopped out of the dense tall timber. In the midst of the clearing a log cabin, a story and a half high. On two sides of the cabin a straggling orchard of peach and apple trees. In the cabin window a dim light.

It was then about eleven o'clock. The three Troopers, effacing themselves in the shadows, laid final plans.

"The cabin had two rooms on the top floor and one below," said Hallisey beneath his breath. The first-floor room had a door and two windows on the north, and the same on the south, just opposite. Under the west end was a cellar, with an outside door. Before the main door to the north was a little porch. This, by day, commanded the sweep of the mountainside; and here, when Drake was "hiding out" in some neighboring eyrie, expecting pursuit, his wife was wont to signal him concerning the movements of intruders.

Her code was written in dish water. A panful thrown to the east meant danger in the west, and *vice versa*; this Hallisey himself had seen and now recalled in case of need.

Up to the present moment each officer had carried his carbine, taken apart and wrapped in a bundle, to avoid the remark of chance observers by the way. Now each put his weapon together, ready for use. They compared their watches, setting them to the second. They discarded their coats and hats.

The moon was flooding the clearing with high, pale light, adding greatly to the difficulty of their task. Accordingly, they plotted carefully. Each Trooper took a door — Halli-

sey that to the north, Merryfield that to the south, Smith that of the cellar. It was agreed that each should creep to a point opposite the door on which he was to advance, ten minutes being allowed for all to reach their initial positions; that at exactly five minutes to midnight the advance should be started, slowly, through the tall grass of the clearing toward the cabin; that in case of any unusual noise or alarm, each man should lie low exactly five minutes before resuming this advance; and that from a point fifty yards from the cabin a rush should be made upon the doors.

According to the request of the District Attorney, Drake was to be taken "dead or alive," but according to an adamantine principle of the Force, he must be taken not only alive, but unscathed if that were humanly possible. This meant that he must not be given an opportunity to run and so render shooting necessary. If, however, he should break away, his chance of escape would be small, as each Trooper was a dead shot with the weapons he was carrying.

The scheme concerted, the three officers separated, heading apart to their several starting points. At five minutes before midnight, to the tick of their synchronized watches, each began to glide through the tall grass. But it was late September. The grass was dry. Old briar-veins dragged at brittle stalks. Shimmering whispers of withered leaves echoed to the smallest touch; and when the men were still some two hundred yards from the cabin the sharp ears of a dog caught the rumor of all these tiny sounds — and the dog barked.

Every man stopped short — moved not a finger again till five minutes had passed. Then once more each began to creep — reached the fifty-yard point — stood up, with a long breath, and dashed for his door.

At one and the same moment, practically, the three stood in the cabin, viewing a scene of domestic peace. A short, square, swarthy woman, black of eye, high of cheek bone,

stood by a stove calmly stirring a pot. On the table beside her, on the floor around her, clustered many jars of peaches — jars freshly filled, steaming hot, awaiting their tops. In a corner three little children, huddled together on a low bench, stared at the strangers with sleepy eyes. Three chairs; a cupboard with dishes; bunches of corn hanging from the rafters by their husks; festoons of onions; tassels of dried herbs — all this made visible by the dull light of a small kerosene lamp whose dirty chimney was streaked with smoke. All this and nothing more.

Two of the men, jumping for the stairs, searched the upper half-story thoroughly, but without profit.

“Mrs. Drake,” said Hallisey, as they returned, “we are officers of the State Police, come to arrest your husband. Where is he?”

In silence, in utter calm the woman still stirred her pot, not missing the rhythm of a stroke.

“The dog warned them. He’s just got away,” said each officer to himself. “She’s *too* calm.”

She scooped up a spoonful of the fruit, peered at it critically, splashed it back into the bubbling pot. From her manner it appeared the most natural thing in the world to be canning peaches at midnight on the top of South Mountain in the presence of officers of the State Police.

“My husband’s gone to Baltimore,” she vouchsafed at her easy leisure.

“Let’s have a look in the cellar,” said Merryfield, and dropped down the cellar stairs with Hallisey at his heels. Together they ransacked the little cave to a conclusion. During the process, Merryfield conceived an idea.

“Hallisey,” he murmured, “what would you think of my staying down here, while you and Smith go off talking as though we were all together? She might say something to the children, when she believes we’re gone, and I could hear every word through that thin floor.”

"We'll do it!" Hallisey answered, beneath his voice. Then, shouting:—

"Come on, Smith! Let's get away from this; no use wasting time here!"

And in another moment Smith and Hallisey were crashing up the mountainside, calling out: "Hi, there! Merryfield—Oh! Merryfield, wait for us!"—as if their comrade had outstripped them on the trail.

Merryfield had made use of the noise of their departure to establish himself in a tenable position under the widest crack in the floor. Now he held himself motionless, subduing even his breath.

One—two—three minutes of dead silence. Then came the timorous half-whisper of a frightened child:

"Will them men kill father if they find him?"

"S-sh!"

"Mother!" faintly ventured another little voice, "will them men kill father if they find him?"

"S-sh! S-sh! I tell ye!"

"Ma-ma! Will they kill my father?" This was the wail, insistent, uncontrolled, of the smallest child of all.

The crackling tramp of the officers, mounting the trail, had wholly died away. The woman evidently believed all immediate danger past.

"No!" she exclaimed vehemently, "they ain't goin' to lay eyes on yo' father, hair nor hide of him. Quit yer frettin'!"

In a moment she spoke again: "You keep still, now, like good children, while I go out and empty these peach stones. I'll be back in a minute. See you keep still just where you are!"

Stealing noiselessly to the cellar door as the woman left the house, Merryfield saw her making for the woods, a basket on her arm. He watched her till the shadows engulfed her. Then he drew back to his own place and resumed his silent vigil.

Moments passed, without a sound from the room above. Then came soft little thuds on the floor, a whimper or two, small sighs, and a slither of bare legs on bare boards.

"Poor little kiddies!" thought Merryfield, "they're coiling down to sleep!"

Back in the days when the Force was started, the Major had said to each recruit of them all:—

"I expect you to treat women and children at all times with every consideration."

From that hour forth the principle has been grafted into the lives of the men. It is instinct now—self-acting, deep, and unconscious. No tried Trooper deliberately remembers it. It is an integral part of him, like the drawing of his breath.

"I wish I could manage to spare those babies and their mother in what's to come!" Merryfield pondered as he lurked in the mold-scented dark.

A quarter of an hour went by. Five minutes more. Footsteps nearing the cabin from the direction of the woods. Low voices—very low. Indistinguishable words. Then the back door opened. Two persons entered, and all that they now uttered was clear.

"It was them that the dog heard," said a man's voice. "Get me my rifle and all my ammunition. I'll go to Maryland. I'll get a job on that stone quarry near Westminster. I'll send some money as soon as I'm paid."

"But you won't start *tonight!*" exclaimed the wife.

"Yes, tonight—this minute. Quick! I wouldn't budge an inch for the County folks. But with the State Troopers after me, that's another thing. If I stay around here now they'll get me dead sure—and send me up too. My gun, I say!"

"Oh, Daddy, Daddy, don't go away!" "Don't go away off and leave me, Daddy!" "Don't go, don't go!" came the children's plaintive wails, hoarse with fatigue and fright.

Merryfield stealthily crept from the cellar's outside door, hugging the wall of the cabin, moving toward the rear. As he reached the corner, and was about to make the turn toward the back, he drew his six-shooter and laid his carbine down in the grass. For the next step, he knew, would bring him into plain sight. If Drake offered any resistance, the ensuing action would be at short range or hand to hand.

He rounded the corner. Drake was standing just outside the door, a rifle in his left hand, his right hand hidden in the pocket of his overcoat. In the doorway stood the wife, with the three little children crowding before her. It was the last moment. They were saying good-by.

Merryfield covered the bandit with his revolver.

“Put up your hands! You are under arrest,” he commanded.

“Who the hell are you?” Drake flung back. As he spoke he thrust his rifle into the grasp of the woman and snatched his right hand from its concealment. In its grip glistened the barrel of a nickel-plated revolver.

Merryfield could have easily shot him then and there — would have been amply warranted in doing so. But he had heard the children's voices. Now he saw their innocent, terrified eyes.

“Poor — little — kiddies!” he thought again.

Drake stood six feet two inches high, and weighed some two hundred pounds, all brawn. Furthermore, he was desperate. Merryfield is merely of medium build.

“Nevertheless, I'll take a chance,” he said to himself, returning his six-shooter to its holster. And just as the outlaw threw up his own weapon to fire, the Trooper, in a running jump, plunged into him with all fours, exactly as, when a boy, he had plunged off a springboard into the old mill dam of a hot July afternoon.

Too amazed even to pull his trigger, Drake gave backward a step into the doorway. Merryfield's clutch toward his

right hand missed the gun, fastening instead on the sleeve of his heavy coat. Swearing wildly while the woman and children screamed behind him, the bandit struggled to break the Trooper's hold — tore and pulled until the sleeve, where Merryfield held it, worked down over the gun in his own grip. So Merryfield, twisting the sleeve, caught a lock-hold on hand and gun together.

Drake, standing on the doorsill, had now some eight inches advantage of height. The door opened inward, from right to left. With a tremendous effort Drake forced his assailant to his knees, stepped back into the room, seized the door with his left hand and with the whole weight on his shoulder slammed it to, on the Trooper's wrist.

The pain was excruciating — but it did not break that lockhold on the outlaw's hand and gun. Shooting from his knees like a projectile, Merryfield flung his whole weight at the door. Big as Drake was, he could not hold it. It gave, and once more the two men hung at grips, this time within the room.

Drake's one purpose was to turn the muzzle of his imprisoned revolver upon Merryfield. Merryfield, with his left still clinching that deadly hand caught in its sleeve, now grabbed the revolver in his own right hand, with a twist dragged it free, and flung it out of the door.

But, as he dropped his right defense, taking both hands to the gun, the outlaw's powerful left grip closed on Merryfield's throat with a strangle hold.

With that great thumb closing his windpipe, with the world turning red and black, "Guess I can't put it over, after all!" the Trooper said to himself.

Reaching for his own revolver, he shoved the muzzle against the bandit's breast.

"Damn you, *shoot!*!" cried the other, believing his end was come.

But in that same instant Merryfield once more caught a

glimpse of the fear-stricken faces of the babies, huddled together beyond.

“ Hallisey and Smith must be here soon,” he thought. “ I won’t shoot yet.”

Again he dropped his revolver back into the holster, seizing the wrist of the outlaw to release that terrible clamp on his throat. As he did so, Drake with a lightning twist reached around to the Trooper’s belt and possessed himself of the gun. As he fired Merryfield had barely time and space to throw back his head. The flash blinded him — scorched his face hairless. The bullet grooved his body under the upflung arm still wrenching at the clutch that was shutting off his breath.

Perhaps, with the shot, the outlaw insensibly somewhat relaxed that choking arm. Merryfield tore loose. Half-blinded and gasping though he was, he flung himself again at his adversary and landed a blow in his face. Drake, giving backward, kicked over a row of peach jars, slipped on the slimy stream that poured over the bare floor, and dropped the gun.

Pursuing his advantage, Merryfield delivered blow after blow on the outlaw’s face and body, backing him around the room, while both men slipped and slid, fell and recovered, on the jam-coated floor. The table crashed over, carrying with it the solitary lamp, whose flame died harmlessly, smothered in tepid mush. Now only the moonlight illuminated the scene.

Drake was maneuvering always to recover the gun. His hand touched the back of a chair. He picked the chair up, swung it high, and was about to smash it down on his adversary’s head when Merryfield seized it in the air.

At this moment the woman, who had been crouching against the wall nursing the rifle that her husband had put into her charge, rushed forward clutching the barrel of the

gun, swung it at full arm's length as she would have swung an ax, and brought the stock down on the Trooper's right hand.

That vital hand dropped — fractured, done. But in the same second Drake gave a shriek of pain as a shot rang out and his own right arm fell powerless.

In the door stood Hallisey, smoking revolver in hand, smiling grimly in the moonlight at the neatness of his own aim. What is the use of killing a man, when you can wing him as trigly as that?

Private Smith, who had entered by the other door, was taking the rifle out of the woman's grasp — partly because she had prodded him viciously with the muzzle. He examined the chambers.

"Do you know this thing is loaded?" he asked her in a mild, detached voice.

She returned his gaze with frank despair in her black eyes.

"Drake, do you surrender?" asked Hallisey.

"Oh, I'll give up. You've got me!" groaned the outlaw. Then he turned on his wife with bitter anger. " Didn't I tell ye?" he snarled. " Didn't I tell ye they'd get me if you kept me hangin' around here? These ain't no damn deputies. *These is the State Police!*"

"An' yet, if I'd known that gun was loaded," said she, "there'd been some less of 'em tonight!"

They dressed Israel's arm in first-aid fashion. Then they started with their prisoner down the mountain trail, at last resuming connection with their farmer friend. Not without misgivings, the latter consented to hitch up his "double team" and hurry the party to the nearest town where a doctor could be found.

As the doctor dressed the bandit's arm, Private Merryfield, whose broken right hand yet awaited care, observed to the groaning patient:—

"Do you know, you can be thankful to your little children that you have your life left."

"To hell with you and the children and my life. I'd a hundred times rather you'd killed me than take what's comin' now."

Then the three Troopers philosophically hunted up a night restaurant and gave their captive a bite of lunch.

"Now," said Hallisey, as he paid the score, "where's the lockup?"

The three officers, with Drake in tow, proceeded silently through the sleeping streets. Not a ripple did their passing occasion. Not even a dog aroused to take note of them.

Duly they stood at the door of the custodian of the lockup, ringing the bell — again and again ringing it. Eventually someone upstairs raised a window, looked out for an appreciable moment, quickly lowered the window and locked it. Nothing further occurred. Waiting for a reasonable interval the officers rang once more. No answer. Silence complete.

Then they pounded on the door till the entire block heard.

Here, there, up street and down, bedroom windows gently opened, then closed with finality more gentle yet. Silence. Not a voice. Not a foot on a stair.

The officers looked at each other perplexed. Then, by chance, they looked at Drake. Drake, so lately black with suicidal gloom, was grinning! Grinning as a man does when the citadel of his heart is comforted.

"You don't understand, do ye!" chuckled he. "Well, I'll tell ye. What do them folks see when they open their windows and look down here in the road? They see three hard-lookin' fellers with guns in their hands, here in this bright moonlight. And they see somethin' scarier to them than a hundred strangers with guns — they see *ME!* There ain't a mother's son of 'em that'll budge downstairs while I'm here, not if you pound on their doors till the cows come home." And he slapped his knee with his good hand and

laughed in pure ecstasy — a laugh that caught all the little group and rocked it as with one mind.

“ We don’t begrudge you that, do we boys ? ” Hallisey conceded. “ Smith, you’re as respectable-looking as any of us. Hunt around and see if you can find a Constable that isn’t onto this thing. We’ll wait here for you.”

Moving out of the zone of the late demonstration, Private Smith learned the whereabouts of the home of a Constable.

“ What’s wanted ? ” asked the Constable, responding like a normal burgher to Smith’s knock at his door.

“ Officer of State Police,” answered Smith. “ I have a man under arrest and want to put him in the lockup. Will you get me the keys ? ”

“ Sure. I’ll come right down and go along with you myself. Just give me a jiffy to get on my trousers and boots,” cried the Constable, clearly glad of a share in the adventure.

In a moment the borough official was at the Trooper’s side, talking eagerly as they moved toward the place where the party waited.

“ So, he’s a highwayman, is he ? Good ! and a burglar, too, and a cattle-thief ! Good work ! And you’ve got him right up the street, ready to jail ! Well, I’ll be switched. Now, what might his name be ? Israel Drake ? *Not Israel Drake !* Oh, my God ! ”

The Constable had stopped in his tracks like a man struck paralytic.

“ No, stranger,” he quavered. “ I reckon I — I — I won’t go no further with you just now. Here, I’ll give you the keys. You can use ‘em yourself : These here’s for the doors. This bunch is for the cells. *Good-night* to you. I’ll be getting back home ! ”

By the first train next morning the Troopers, conveying their prisoner, left the village for the County Town. As they deposited Drake in the safekeeping of the County Jail and were about to depart, he seemed burdened with an impulse

to speak, yet said nothing. Then, as the three officers were leaving the room, he leaned over and touched Merryfield on the shoulder.

“Shake! ”.he growled, offering his unwounded hand.

Merryfield “shook” cheerfully, with his own remaining sound member.

“I’m plumb sorry to see ye go, and that’s a fact,” growled the outlaw. “Because — well, because you’re the only *man* that ever tried to arrest me.”

* * *

KATHERINE MAYO comes of Mayflower stock, but her birthplace was Ridgway, Pennsylvania. She was educated in private schools at Boston and Cambridge, Massachusetts, and soon became interested in historical research. The first of her work that attracted wide attention was her history of the Pennsylvania State Police, published under the title of *Justice To All*.

This history gives the complete story of the famous Mounted Police of Pennsylvania, illustrated with realistic narrative and reinforced with statistics. The occasion of its writing was a personal experience — the cold-blooded murder of Sam Howell, a fine young American workingman, a carpenter by trade, near Miss Mayo’s country home in New York State. Sam Howell, carrying the pay roll on payday morning, gave his life for his honor as gallantly as any soldier in any war. He was shot down by four highwaymen, to whom he would not surrender his trust although he himself was unarmed. Sheriff, deputy sheriffs, constables, and some seventy-five fellow laborers available as sheriff’s posse spent hours within a few hundred feet of the little wood in which the four murderers were known to be hiding, but no arrest was made, and the murderers remained at large.

“You will have forgotten all this in a month’s time,” said Howell’s fellow workmen to Miss Mayo an hour after the tragedy. “Sam was only a laboring man, like ourselves.

None of us have any protection when we work in country parts."

The remark sounded bitter indeed. But investigation proved it only too true. Sam Howell had not been the first, by many hundreds, to give his life because the State had no real means to enforce the law. Sam Howell, however, was not to be forgotten; neither was his sacrifice to be vain. From it was to spring a great movement, taking effect first in the state in which he died, and then spreading through the Union.

At that time Pennsylvania was the only state of the forty-seven that had met its just obligation to protect all its people under its laws. Pennsylvania's State Police had been for ten years a body of defenders of justice, "without fear and without reproach."

In order that the facts about them might be conveniently available, Miss Mayo went to Pennsylvania and made a careful analysis of their work. *Justice To All*, the result of Miss Mayo's study, was largely responsible for the passage of the act creating the Department of New York State Police, now popularly called the "State Troopers."

In a Chain-Store Grocery

Fear is a strong emotion. It is surprising to discover how many of our thoughts and acts proceed from some deep-seated fear, of which we may be entirely unaware until we try to analyze our actions. The fear of losing his job is something that haunts every man who is employed by someone else. If he has a wife and family, his need for security is even greater. During the "depression years" following 1929, when wages were low and jobs heartbreakingly scarce, many a man was harassed night and day by the fear of being told that his services were "no longer required." To be laid off is the tragedy of the workingman. In "Salt of the Earth," by Rose Elizabeth Reiss, we follow the fortunes of James Hicks, who managed a chain-grocery store. One day the postman handed him a letter. It was a large smooth envelope with the company stamp. . . .

SALT OF THE EARTH

by ROSE ELIZABETH REISS

James told Tillie about it when he went home for dinner that day. One of the drivers had brought him the news. "I just can't work like I oughta," he said. "Seems like it takes all the starch outa me."

He hadn't minded when he'd heard about the Company closing the first store. There always had been stores that didn't pay. Usually, though, they'd open again in a better location. But the second one — when he'd heard about that, he'd been upset.

Now another — the third in two months. If they were closing stores, his might be next. True, he was doing the business. He'd been watching mighty close; always had. But since that second store had been closed . . . When he counted the receipts at night now, he could feel his heart pounding, as though he were frightened.

He'd felt so much a part of the Company. He even owned five shares of stock. But now — well, it was different somehow. The Company had become a Force, something he couldn't fight against, a force whose ways were incalculable.

He tried to explain it to Tillie. "It's so unexpected-like," he said. "It was like my store; but better than my store. Because anybody can open his own little store, if he can scrape up the money. But when he can suit the Company, he must be good."

Thirty-five years he'd been with the Company. He liked

to talk about it. "Yessir," he told each new delivery boy, "I started just like you. And I didn't get the money you're gettin', either. And old Hobbs, the manager then, he was a mean cuss. We *worked* in those days, I tell you!"

He could remember when they'd made him manager. Tillie and he had been talking about getting married. You could, on a manager's salary. He'd felt it might be—but there was Collins. Collins was a big husky fellow. They might think he looked better behind the counter. "And say, you do look lost in them aprons," Collins would tease him. "We'll have to be tellin' the Company to send boy sizes."

Well, he'd never been strong-looking. Tillie did her best to feed him up, but, as she said, "The more you eat, the fatter I get." But he could work—better than the best of them.

"They couldn't kick you out after the way you've worked for them," Tillie said indignantly.

James shook his head. One didn't question the ways of the Company.

"But I don't know what you're fussin' so for," Tillie said easily. "You ain't heard nothing 'cept they've closed three stores, and here you get yourself in a state."

"But if they did?" James stared at Tillie. "I never thought . . . I felt so . . . why . . . it'd be like somebody told me you'd run off with another man."

Tillie laughed comfortably. "How you talk!"

He didn't feel the same way—no, not even about going back to the store. He'd never taken the full hour for lunch, and Tillie complained continually about having to get dinner in the middle of the day because he refused to come home for it at night. It was too busy between five and seven. Tillie always had sandwiches ready for him at noon to take with him for his supper. But now, he told himself, it was only a duty and a habit.

II

He always gave a quick glance around when he entered the store. Of course the boys hadn't got the orders out yet! He was like the lover of a faithless mistress — joy might be gone, but fidelity was deep-rooted. "Don't you know Mrs. Williams is waiting for her order?" he said furiously. "Believe me, you can't get anywhere with the Company that way!"

"Who cares?" Gene said. "Say, Mr. Hicks, I ain't plan-nin' to stay in this hole too long."

"You kids nowadays think you're pretty smart. A rollin' stone gathers no moss. Let me tell you, that's mighty good sense. I stuck with the Company. I knew they were a tough outfit, but all the better! When they made me manager I knew I had to be good to get it. And I ain't never been sorry. A good steady job and my own boss." Even as he said it, James's heart contracted. His own boss! He had thought, almost, that he *owned* the store.

There was a bit of a rush then — customers coming in. Those were the times James liked best. Not that he was ever idle! When there were no customers, there was the stock to keep in order and the clerks to be reminded of their lapses and the window to be fixed and orders to get out. Time never hung heavy for James Hicks!

But this? Why, everybody in the neighborhood knew James! Some of them buying from him for thirty-five years. And everybody asking for Mr. Hicks!

James would never get used to his false teeth. As he smiled, his long upper lip and thin cheeks gripped the plates. Perhaps it was the strain of maintaining that grimace of obsequiousness, while he kept up a steady stream of talk, that had worn the furrows in his cheeks and forehead. Perhaps the frenzy with which he worked contributed.

James always said he "just ate up work." He never

felt tired — except occasionally when he went home and gave himself time to sit down. "And who wouldn't be tired?" Tillie said. "Working like you was possessed. All day, from six in the morning till nine at night, and on Saturdays until twelve. If you'd push more work on the others . . ."

"You can't depend on them," James explained. "It ain't like when I was startin' out. Boys are different today." He *had* thought of it when he hired Bert. Bert was tall; he could do the reaching. But somehow he couldn't seem to remember not to do things himself.

"I can't see how you do it," Tillie concluded. Tillie never found any need for hurry. There were no devils after her!

III

It was dark these mornings at six o'clock. But "six o'clock, sharp" was James's pride. "That's my rule. Never been five minutes late in twenty years." Sick? No, he was never sick. "If you just don't coddle yourself . . ." He couldn't think what Mrs. Watts would say if he weren't there in time for her. She stopped in every morning on her way to Mass.

The clerks didn't get in until later. "It keeps me on the hop," he told Mrs. Watts. "But gosh, I don't mind that. Keeps the blood circulating. Heh, heh!"

The door opened, letting in the raw morning chill. James rubbed his hands briskly. "Ah, good morning, Mrs. Hostetter. Out gettin' the morning air too? A pound of butter? Yes, ma'am." Rushing about madly as he talked, his grin set. "How about some canned goods, Mrs. Hostetter? A special on them this week. And you know, when Hulbert has a special! Coffee? Yes, ma'am. How about some bacon? 'Morning, Mrs. Heffler."

When there was a bit of a lull, the sidewalk must be swept.

It wasn't really James's job, but you couldn't leave it like that until Gene ambled in!

Today would be a long day. Sometimes the boys grumbled about the late closing on Saturday. Funny that some men should be like that! What was a man's life if it wasn't his work and gettin' ahead?

He let Gene and Bert go home at eleven o'clock. There'd been no chance for them to do the "reddin' up." Well, let them go. He could work in peace. The window, now — that ought to be perked up a bit for Monday. He liked to start the week right.

Tillie had been angry. She'd stayed up waiting for him, and the house got so cold! She was cranky all Sunday morning. Funny how women were! Only time Tillie got angry was when he worked what she called "too hard."

IV

He told her when he came home Monday noon. "A mighty good thing I stayed to fix the window Saturday night." Tillie glanced at him quickly. Something in his tone . . .

"There I was just waitin' on Mrs. Pickett — and you know how long it takes her. She never can remember what she wants."

"Well, what about it?" Tillie asked.

"Well, where was I? . . . Oh yeh, waitin' on Mrs. Pickett. Well, I'd just handed her a package of bacon when I see his big shiny limousine pull up in front of my window."

"Whose limousine?" Tillie asked.

"Mr. Alton's. The big boss."

"No!" Tillie gasped. The small beady black eyes blinked behind the folds of ruddy flesh.

"Well," James continued, relishing his importance, "I didn't know him. He'd never come around himself. They send district managers and vice presidents, but C. J. A.

himself! Somehow, though, I had an idea. Sort of a feeling."

"Well, what did you do?"

"Well, I just finished waitin' on Mrs. Pickett and then I says, 'What can I do for you, sir?' — very polite and smiling."

"What did he say?" Tillie demanded.

"Give me a chance, woman. He says, 'Good morning, Hicks!' I says, 'Good morning, sir.' He says, 'I'm Mr. Alton.' I says, 'I guessed as much.' So he smiles, kinda. But I could feel my heart thumping away, and I was wonderin' if my face was white or red. I knew it turned color. 'And how is business?' he says. 'Oh, pretty good, Mr. Alton,' I says. 'Of course I'm never satisfied if I'm not increasin' my sales.'"

"What did you want to go and tell him that for?"

"That's all right. 'But,' I says, 'I've not fallen below. And for these times that's doin' good. All the merchants on the street tell me business has fallen off something terrible.' So Mr. Alton nods a coupla times. Then he says, 'Do you mind if I look around a bit?' But he's just bein' polite, because he's started lookin' already. Then he says, 'How are your sales on coffee?' 'Mighty brisk, sir,' I says. Then he says, 'Good morning,' and he goes. I walked out to the car. I was able because there was only one customer and Bert was waitin' on him, though his eyes was gogglin' outa his head.

"After he went, I just felt weak—and awful tired. Tillie, it was like, all of a sudden, I was old. Funny thing it was. Everything hurt me. I even had to take my teeth out when the boys wasn't lookin'. That kinda brought me round, though—I couldn't let the boys see. . . . So I started bawlin' Bert out for not tendin' to his business when Mr. Alton was there, and I hustled Gene out with the orders. . . . But I'm terrible worried, Tillie. When the Presi-

dent himself comes . . . I don't know, Tillie. What would I do?"

There wasn't much that Tillie could say. It did look funny, and no foolin'. What James would ever do . . . she didn't dare think. Land, it was bad enough with him on Sundays! The man fidgeted so, he almost drove her crazy!

v

All the savor of life was gone for James. Working when you thought it might all be over any day wasn't the same as when you thought it was going on and on as long as you lived.

It was all right whenever he could keep from thinking. But—"I'll be waitin' on a customer and goin' along all right," he told Tillie. "Then all of a sudden it'll come to me. Maybe next week they'll be tellin' me it's all over. Then what's the use of all this? What've I been workin' for then? And I feel like a fool. Because if the work don't matter, what am I livin' for?"

Some days he felt it was the uncertainty of it that was so hard. If they would tell him and have it over! Maybe he could get another job. Maybe *they'd* get him another job. Not that it would be the same. James's chest felt hard and lumpy. No, it wouldn't be the same. It couldn't ever be his store the way this was.

He worried about the way he'd acted when Mr. Alton had called. Perhaps he should have brought out his records. Had the place been looking tidy? If only he could remember! But he'd been so upset! He thought of asking Bert if he had looked nervous when Mr. Alton spoke to him, but thought it was no use getting too familiar with the help. A manager had to keep his dignity.

VI

The week went by. On Monday, that man from across the street came in. Funny—he *was* coming into the store a lot. A man—what did he do that he was home so much? When the man came in again he'd have to try to find out.

He'd heard that the Company sent out investigators. Spies, that's what they were! It was hard to go on working.

Mrs. Jameson remarked when she came to give her order: "You're not lookin' so good, Mr. Hicks. You work too hard. I always tell Mrs. Hicks, 'I don't see how your husband can go climbing round like a monkey all day'—no offense, Mr. Hicks. It ain't human! Don't be foolish! No use killin' yourself for any company."

Once James would have argued such heresy heatedly. Now he smiled wearily. "Guess I'm not as young as I was, Mrs. Jameson."

The man came in again at noon time. James gripped his plates to bare his teeth. Steady now, steady. "Yes, sir, what can I do for you?"

It was hard for James to jump up on the counter to reach for the can of beans. His legs trembled. He sprang down with a forced agility. If the man *were* an investigator . . . You had to look spry!

"You're new in the neighborhood, ain't you, sir?" James jerked his face into its grimace. That was the stuff—just act natural!

"Yes, rather," the man said.

"Live on the street?" James persisted. They called him "the man from across the street," but all they knew was that he had been seen crossing the street in front of the store. "We could deliver your orders. Any time you like, sir."

"Well, any time we can't come in. We don't use so much, though."

"Big or little, it's all the same to us," James said.

"Thanks," the man said. He walked out before James could pursue his inquiry.

"D'ya know where that man lives?" he asked Gene.

"Nope. Just see him lately." Gene's freckled face looked at James inquisitively.

"Fix up that stand," James said gruffly. "What you standin' round for? How you think it looks when customers come in, with the place like this?"

The man came in frequently. He never bought much. James tried to wait on him — once even told Bert, "You gotta tend to that order," so that he might talk to him.

"You can't get anything outa him," James told Tillie. "Well, one thing, if they're figgerin' on givin' up the store, they're sure goin' to a lot of trouble first. First the President and now this inves —"

"Now, James," Tillie objected. "You don't know if this man is from the Company. Maybe he's outa work. Maybe," — Tillie was inspired, — "maybe he works nights!"

James tried hard to think that Tillie might be right. But he worried. "It's like that thing — what d'ya call it? — robot," he told Tillie. "That's what I'm like. Hustlin' round same as usual, but my heart ain't in it."

It was right after this that the man started talking a lot when he came in. That was bad! Before, James had tried to talk to him to draw information, but now that the man developed this sudden loquaciousness James felt sure that his suspicions were right. The man hadn't given a good enough report, and now he was trying to see what he could find out!

James's nerves were playing him unaccustomed tricks. If a man came in, his pulse fluttered wildly. When he had to count his receipts at night, he broke out in a cold sweat. Suppose they had fallen off! He tried to push goods as he never had before. He worked coldly, his heart heavy, but with a crazed determination.

Tillie did a bit of investigating of her own. She went to the other Company store about eight blocks away and asked if the man — “he has carroty, bristly hair and a big mouth and uneven teeth” — had been seen there. They were sure he hadn’t. Then she tried to find out if the man really lived on the street. Mrs. Haines, in 1183, thought a man who lived in the third floor rear might be the one. She couldn’t be sure.

Tillie couldn’t pursue the subject too long. After all, one had one’s pride! Everybody thought James was so well fixed. And then there was always the chance that it might all be nothing. Tillie could be more sanguine than James.

VII

It was just about the time that James had almost determined to write to the district manager, to ask if there was any likelihood of his losing his store, that the letter came. It was about ten o’clock. James was just weighing Mrs. Heller’s butter.

The postman handed the letter to James. “Fine day, Mr. Hicks,” he said. “Great,” James said, and gripped his plates for a newer smile than he’d been aiming at Mrs. Heller.

It was a large smooth envelope. James stole a glance. “How about some nice cheese? Just came in, Mrs. Heller.” It had a Company stamp — M. M. Hulbert & Company! James’s breath came with troublesome unevenness.

He put the letter on the shelf behind him. “So that will be all?” — with automatic alertness. He pushed the package at her. Mrs. Heller looked somewhat surprised. Now!

His hands were trembling frightfully. He looked toward Bert. If it were — if it were bad — Bert must not see. He didn’t want to show . . . There was a jagged tear in the envelope. He looked at it dazedly. He always opened envelopes so neatly!

“My dear Mr. Hicks . . . excellent service . . . clever

merchandising. . . ." James's ribs ached queerly. "So that even in this depression . . . We have, as you know, been forced to close some stores in the same district with No. 49." James put his hand to his throat. All color left his face. He turned a sickly green. Store No. 49—he tried to fix his attention. . . . Store No. 49—why, that was *his* store! His hand shook; the type on the page flickered. "We are happy to inform you that your exceptional work under these difficult conditions is much appreciated by this Company, and we shall hope to show our appreciation in a more practical way as business improves. . . ."

There was a soap box near, and he sat down. He felt limp. He read the letter over again—slowly, carefully—to make sure. Slowly the color came back in his face. But he felt curiously empty. He tried to think. He—he didn't have to be afraid any more!

Why, it was more than that! He'd had a letter from the big chief—from old C. J. A. himself! The President of the Company had written to him! Yes, there it was—signed in his own hand—"C. J. Alton," and under it, "PRESIDENT." They had stopped all other business—an important man like C. J. A. had stopped all other business to write to James Hicks, to tell him how invaluable he was to the Company!

He sent Gene over to call Tillie. Another man might have left the store, he reflected with pride. But not James Hicks!

James showed it to everybody. "Yessirree, the President of the Company himself! And I've heard people say corporations ain't got no heart!"

He kept the letter in his inside coat pocket where he could get at it easily. After a while, the paper split a bit along one of the creases, and then James bought a parchment envelope to keep it in.

It was too bad the Company had to let Gene go, of course—cutting expenses. Made a little more work. But James

could do it. He liked work! He didn't want the President to think he'd made a mistake—that he couldn't depend on him!

* * *

ROSE ELIZABETH REISS is a "lost person." When the *Atlantic Monthly*, in April, 1933, published the story "Salt of the Earth," a brief note appeared in the "Contributor's Column."

"If witches can ride brooms," said Rose Elizabeth Reiss to herself, "why cannot I, a housewife and mother of two children, ride a pen?" So saying, she mounted her hobby horse, put the spurs of ambition to him, and dashed off at full gallop. "Salt of the Earth" is the trophy she brought back from her first run.

Apparently she stopped only long enough to exhibit her trophy and then galloped off again over the hills and far away. It has not been possible to find any trace of her. Perhaps this is a case for Mr. Keen. Do you know that radio program?

The First Americans

The average American boy waits with impatience until he is old enough for a driver's license. If he can persuade his parents and the authorities that he should have a junior license, as is possible in some of our states, his happiness is complete. When he does get it, he may have to content himself with a Model-T, but he dreams of sitting at the wheel of a high-powered car and "letting her out." William Saroyan writes the following tale as if it were truth, although obviously parts of it would have been impossible. Probably he was just putting on paper what he himself dreamed of doing when he was fourteen.

Mr. Saroyan's style may require a bit of explanation and a word of warning. He is a law unto himself in writing, and it is probably just as well not to imitate his method of punctuation, which has little to commend it to teachers. He says himself that he does not believe that this manner of writing is the way to get a message "to go highrolling down the ages," but he rather likes it just the same. It is no secret that he approves of himself, too.

LOCOMOTIVE 38, THE OJIBWAY

by WILLIAM SAROVAN

One day a man came to town on a donkey and began loafing around in the public library where I used to spend most of my time in those days. He was a tall young Indian of the Ojibway tribe. He told me his name was Locomotive 38. Everybody in town believed he had escaped from an asylum.

Six days after he arrived in town his animal was struck by the Tulare Street trolley and seriously injured. The following day the animal passed away, most likely of internal injuries, on the corner of Mariposa and Fulton streets. The animal sank to the pavement, fell on the Indian's leg, groaned and died. When the Indian got his leg free he got up and limped into the drugstore on the corner and made a long-distance telephone call. He telephoned his brother in Oklahoma. The call cost him a lot of money, which he dropped into the slot as requested by the operator as if he were in the habit of making such calls every day.

I was in the drugstore at the time, eating a Royal Banana Special, with crushed walnuts.

When he came out of the telephone booth he saw me sitting at the soda fountain eating this fancy dish.

Hello, Willie, he said.

He knew my name wasn't Willie — he just liked to call me that.

He limped to the front of the store where the gum was,

and bought three packages of Juicy Fruit. Then he limped back to me and said, What's that you're eating, Willie? It looks good.

This is what they call a Royal Banana Special, I said.

The Indian got up on the stool next to me.

Give me the same, he said to the soda fountain girl.

That's too bad about your animal, I said.

There's no place for an animal in this world, he said.
What kind of an automobile should I buy?

Are you going to buy an automobile? I said.

I've been thinking about it for several minutes now, he said.

I didn't think you had any money, I said. I thought you were poor.

That's the impression people get, he said. Another impression they get is that I'm crazy.

I didn't get the impression that you were crazy, I said, but I didn't get the impression that you were rich, either.

Well, I am, the Indian said.

I wish I was rich, I said.

What for? he said.

Well, I said, I've been wanting to go fishing at Mendota for three years in a row now. I need some equipment and some kind of an automobile to get out there in.

Can you drive an automobile? the Indian said.

I can drive anything, I said.

Have you ever driven an automobile? he said.

Not yet, I said. So far I haven't had any automobile to drive, and it's against my family religion to steal an automobile.

Do you mean to tell me you believe you could get into an automobile and start driving? he said.

That's right, I said.

Remember what I was telling you on the steps of the public library the other evening? he said.

You mean about the machine age? I said.

Yes, he said.

I remember, I said.

All right, he said. Indians are born with an instinct for riding, rowing, hunting, fishing, and swimming. Americans are born with an instinct for fooling around with machines.

I'm no American, I said.

I know, the Indian said. You're an Armenian. I remember. I asked you and you told me. You're an Armenian born in America. You're fourteen years old and already you know you'll be able to drive an automobile the minute you get into one. You're a typical American, although your complexion, like my own, is dark.

Driving a car is no trick, I said. There's nothing to it. It's easier than riding a donkey.

All right, the Indian said. Just as you say. If I go up the street and buy an automobile, will you drive for me?

Of course, I said.

How much in wages would you want? he said.

You mean you want to give me wages for driving an automobile? I said.

Of course, the Ojibway said.

Well, I said, that's very nice of you, but I don't want any money for driving an automobile.

Some of the journeys may be long ones, he said.

The longer the better, I said.

Are you restless? he said.

I was born in this little old town, I said.

Don't you like it? he said.

I like mountains and streams and mountain lakes, I said.

Have you ever been in the mountains? he said.

Not yet, I said, but I'm going to reach them some day.

I see, he said. What kind of an automobile do you think I ought to buy?

How about a Ford roadster? I said.

Is that the best automobile? he said.

Do you want the *best*? I said.

Shouldn't I have the best? he said.

I don't know, I said. The best costs a lot of money.

What is the best? he said.

Well, I said, some people think the Cadillac is the best. Others like the Packard. They're both pretty good. I wouldn't know which is best. The Packard is beautiful to see going down the highway, but so is the Cadillac. I've watched a lot of them fine cars going down the highway.

How much is a Packard? he said.

Around three thousand dollars, I said. Maybe a little more.

Can we get one right away? he said.

I got down off the stool. He sounded crazy, but I knew he wasn't.

Listen, Mr. Locomotive, I said, do you really want to buy a Packard right away?

You know my animal passed away a few minutes ago, he said.

I saw it happen, I said. They'll probably be arresting you any minute now for leaving the animal in the street.

They won't arrest me, he said.

They will if there's a law against leaving a dead donkey in the street, I said.

No, they won't, he said.

Why not? I said.

Well, he said, they won't after I show them a few papers I carry around with me all the time. The people of this country have a lot of respect for money, and I've got a lot of money.

I guess he is crazy after all, I thought.

Where'd you get all this money? I said.

I own some land in Oklahoma, he said. About fifty thousand acres.

Is it worth money? I said.

No, he said. All but about twenty acres of it is worthless. I've got some oil wells on them twenty acres. My brother and I.

How did you Ojibways ever get down to Oklahoma? I said. I always thought the Ojibways lived up north, up around the Great Lakes.

That's right, the Indian said. We used to live up around the Great Lakes, but my grandfather was a pioneer. He moved west when everybody else did.

Oh, I said. Well, I guess they won't bother you about the dead donkey at that.

They won't bother me about anything, he said. It won't be because I've got money. It'll be because they think I'm crazy. Nobody in this town but you knows I've got money. Do you know where we can get one of them automobiles right away?

The Packard agency is up on Broadway, two blocks beyond the public library, I said.

All right, he said. If you're sure you won't mind driving for me, let's go get one of them. Something bright in color, he said. Red, if they've got red. Where would you like to drive to first?

Would you care to go fishing at Mendota? I said.

I'll take the ride, he said. I'll watch you fish. Where can we get some equipment for you?

Right around the corner at Homan's, I said.

We went around the corner to Homan's and the Indian bought twenty-seven dollars' worth of fishing equipment for me. Then we went up to the Packard agency on Broadway. They didn't have a red Packard, but there was a beautiful green one. It was light green, the color of new grass. This was back there in 1922. The car was a beautiful sports touring model.

Do you think you could drive this great big car? the Indian said.

I know I can drive it, I said.

The police found us in the Packard agency and wanted to arrest the Indian for leaving the dead donkey in the street. He showed them the papers he had told me about and the police apologized and went away. They said they'd removed the animal and were sorry they'd troubled him about it.

It's no trouble at all, he said.

He turned to the manager of the Packard agency, Jim Lewis, who used to run for Mayor every time election time came around.

I'll take this car, he said.

I'll draw up the papers immediately, Jim said.

What papers? the Indian said. I'm going to pay for it now.

*You mean you want to pay three thousand two hundred seventeen dollars and sixty-five cents *cash*? Jim said.*

Yes, the Indian said. It's ready to drive, isn't it?

Of course, Jim said. I'll have the boys go over it with a cloth to take off any dust on it. I'll have them check the motor too, and fill the gasoline tank. It won't take more than ten minutes. If you'll step into the office I'll close the transaction immediately.

Jim and the Indian stepped into Jim's office.

About three minutes later Jim came over to me, a man shaken to the roots.

Aram, he said, who is this guy? I thought he was a nut. I had Johnny telephone the Pacific-Southwest and they said his bank account is being transferred from somewhere in Oklahoma. They said his account is something over a million dollars. I thought he was a nut. Do you know him?

He told me his name is Locomotive 38, I said. That's no name.

That's a translation of his Indian name, Jim said. We've got his full name on the contract. Do you know him?

I've talked to him every day since he came to town on that donkey that died this morning, I said, but I never thought he had any money.

He says you're going to drive for him, Jim said. Are you sure you're the man to drive a great big car like this, son?

Wait a minute now, Mr. Lewis, I said. Don't try to push me out of this chance of a lifetime. I can drive this big Packard as well as anybody else in town.

I'm not trying to push you out of anything, Jim said. I just don't want you to drive out of here and run over six or seven innocent people and maybe smash the car. Get into the car and I'll give you a few pointers. Do you know anything about the gear shift?

I don't know anything about anything yet, I said, but I'll soon find out.

All right, Jim said. Just let me help you.

I got into the car and sat down behind the wheel. Jim got in beside me.

From now on, son, he said, I want you to regard me as a friend who will give you the shirt off his back. I want to thank you for bringing me this fine Indian gentleman.

He told me he wanted the best car on the market, I said. You know I've always been crazy about driving a Packard. Now how do I do it?

Well, Jim said, let's see.

He looked down at my feet.

My gosh, son, he said, your feet don't reach the pedals.

Never mind that, I said. You just explain the gear shift.

Jim explained everything while the boys wiped the dust off the car and went over the motor and filled the gasoline tank. When the Indian came out and got into the car, in the back where I insisted he should sit, I had the motor going.

He says he knows how to drive, the Indian said to Jim Lewis. By instinct, he said. I believe him, too.

You needn't worry about Aram here, Jim said. He can drive all right. Clear the way there, boys, he shouted. Let him have all the room necessary.

I turned the big car around slowly, shifted, and shot out of the agency at about fifty miles an hour, with Jim Lewis running after the car and shouting, Take it easy, son. Don't open up until you get out on the highway. The speed limit in town is twenty-five miles an hour.

The Indian wasn't at all excited, even though I was throwing him around a good deal.

I wasn't doing it on purpose, though. It was simply that I wasn't very familiar with the manner in which the automobile worked.

You're an excellent driver, Willie, he said. It's like I said. You're an American and you were born with an instinct for mechanical contraptions like this.

We'll be in Mendota in an hour, I said. You'll see some great fishing out there.

How far is Mendota? the Indian said.

About ninety miles, I said.

Ninety miles is too far to go in an hour, the Indian said. Take two hours. We're passing a lot of interesting scenery I'd like to look at a little more closely.

All right, I said, but I sure am anxious to get out there and fish.

Well, all right then, the Indian said. Go as fast as you like this time, but some time I'll expect you to drive a little more slowly, so I can see some of the scenery. I'm missing everything. I don't even get a chance to read the signs.

I'll travel slowly *now* if you want me to, I said.

No, he insisted. Let her go. Let her go as fast as she'll go.

Well, we got out to Mendota in an hour and seventeen min-

utes. I would have made better time except for the long stretch of dirt road.

I drove the car right up to the river bank. The Indian asked if I knew how to get the top down, so he could sit in the open and watch me fish. I didn't know how to get the top down, but I got it down. It took me twenty minutes to do it.

I fished for about three hours, fell into the river twice, and finally landed a small one.

You don't know the first thing about fishing, the Indian said.

What am I doing wrong? I said.

Everything, he said. Have you ever fished before?

No, I said.

I didn't think so, he said.

What am I doing wrong? I said.

Well, he said, nothing in particular, only you're fishing at about the same rate of speed that you drive an automobile.

Is that wrong? I said.

It's not exactly wrong, he said, except that it'll keep you from getting anything to speak of, and you'll go on falling into the river.

I'm not falling, I said. They're pulling me in. They've got an awful pull. This grass is mighty slippery, too. There ain't nothing around here to grab hold of.

I reeled in one more little one and then I asked if he'd like to go home. He said he would if I wanted to, too, so I put away the fishing equipment and the two fish and got in the car and started driving back to town.

I drove that big Packard for this Ojibway Indian, Locomotive 38, as long as he stayed in town, which was all summer. He stayed at the hotel all the time. I tried to get him to learn to drive, but he said it was out of the question. I drove that Packard all over the San Joaquin Valley that summer, with the Indian in the back, chewing eight or nine sticks of gum.

He told me to drive anywhere I cared to go, so it was either to some place where I could fish, or some place where I could hunt. He claimed I didn't know anything about fishing or hunting, but he was glad to see me trying. As long as I knew him he never laughed, except once. That was the time I shot at a jack rabbit with a 12-gauge shotgun that had a terrible kick, and killed a crow. He tried to tell me all the time that that was my average. To shoot at a jack rabbit and kill a crow. You're an American, he said. Look at the way you took to this big automobile.

One day in November that year his brother came to town from Oklahoma, and the next day when I went down to the hotel to get him, they told me he'd gone back to Oklahoma with his brother.

Where's the Packard? I said

They took the Packard, the hotel clerk said

Who drove? I said.

The Indian, the clerk said.

They're both Indians, I said. Which of the brothers drove the car?

The one who lived at this hotel, the clerk said.

Are you sure? I said.

Well, I only saw him get into the car out front and drive away, the clerk said. That's all.

Do you mean to tell me he knew how to shift gears? I said.

It *looked* as if he did, the clerk said. He looked like an expert driver to me.

Thanks, I said.

On the way home I figured he'd just wanted me to *believe* he couldn't drive, so *I* could drive all the time and feel good. He was just a young man who'd come to town on a donkey, bored to death or something, who'd taken advantage of the chance to be entertained by a small town kid who was bored to death, too. That's the only way I could figure it out without accepting the general theory that he was crazy.

WILLIAM SAROYAN is like no one on earth but William Saroyan. To sum him up briefly, he was born in the Armenian section of Fresno, California, in 1908, one of what he calls the tribe of "proud and angry Saroyans." His school life was notable principally for alternate leaves without permission and strappings by the principal. He read every book in the Fresno Public Library, or so he says, and driven desperate by boredom, left high school at fifteen with only a penmanship diploma. In his uncle's office he read law and learned shorthand and typing; then he began to write. More than 400 short stories and essays dribbled off the end of his pen or more probably popped from the keys of his typewriter, and on a certain historic day in December, 1933, the magazine *Story* paid him the magnificent sum of fifteen dollars for a story called "The Daring Young Man on the Flying Trapeze." From then on until he received the Pulitzer Prize and the New York Drama Critics Circle Award, life has been just one excitement after another for young Mr. Saroyan.

Never lazy, he worked at a dozen different jobs before fame reached out to seize him, but it is typically Saroyan that he was right there and ready when she did. Most high school pupils hate to write a hundred words. Saroyan flings them about by the hundred thousand. He loves writing, he loves everything that he writes, and he cheerfully and noisily admits that he is the greatest writer in the world. There are two opinions about that, but a sufficient number of people agree with him so that within a little over a year he had three plays produced on Broadway and won the Pulitzer Prize with one of them, *The Time of Your Life*. Again with the Saroyan touch, he refused the prize money because he believed that the play was "no more good and great" than anything else he had written. The resultant publicity did Mr. Saroyan no harm whatever.

So far, Mr. Saroyan has written four plays: *My Heart's in the Highlands*, *The Time of Your Life*, *Love's Old Sweet Song*, and *The Beautiful People*. He has even had a play written about him. It was called "The White-haired Boy"

and folded up after a week's tryout, but that did not discourage the subject of it. It would take a good deal to discourage William Saroyan. From his first success, at the age of nine, he has always believed in his lucky star. Just now he is riding on the crest of the wave. His style is unusual enough to attract the attention of those readers and play-goers who like novelty, and his eccentricities are a gold mine to hard-working reporters. Just how fleeting his fame may be remains to be seen. While he has money, at any rate, he is taking good care of his mother, for whom he built a home in San Francisco and with whom he now lives. He did not forget his old grandmother, either, when she was living. Having promised her fifty dollars if his first play were successful, he flew out to give her the money — fifty silver dollars — which he poured into her hands one at a time because she had no faith in paper money. Her grandson seems not to have inherited her caution — but he is still a young man. Time may yet chasten the most irrepressible member of the tribe of Saroyan.

A Very New American

*If you are even now wrestling with the idiom of some foreign language, you will give sympathetic attention to the troubles of H*Y*M*A*N K*A*P*L*A*N. The first newcomers to these shores struggled with cold, hunger, and marauding Indians. Mr. K*A*P*L*A*N, who arrived only recently, struggled with vocabulary. We visit the classroom which was the scene of his epic endeavors through the courtesy of Leonard Q. Ross. If this sample amuses you, you will find the rest in The Education of H*Y*M*A*N K*A*P*L*A*N, most of which originally appeared in The New Yorker.*

MR. K*A*P*L*A*N AND VOCABULARY

by LEONARD Q. ROSS

“ Vocabulary! ” said Mr. Parkhill. “ Above all, we must work on vocabulary.”

He was probably right. For the students in the beginners’ grade, vocabulary was a dire and pressing need. Spelling, after all, was not of such immediate importance to people who did little writing during their daily lives. Grammar? They needed the substance — words, phrases, idioms — to which grammar might be applied. Pronunciation? Mr. Parkhill had come to the reluctant conclusion that for some of them accurate pronunciation was a near impossibility. Take Mr. Kaplan, for example. Mr. Kaplan was a willing, an earnest, aye! an enthusiastic pupil. And yet, despite Mr. Parkhill’s tireless tutelage, Mr. Kaplan referred to the most celebrated of movie lovers as “ Clock Gebble,” who, it appeared, showed a fine set of teeth “ venever he greens.” Mr. Kaplan, when asked to use “ heaven ” in a sentence, had replied promptly, “ In sommer, ve all heaven a fine time.”

Yes, vocabulary — that, Mr. Parkhill thought, was the greatest need.

“ . . . And so tonight I shall write a list of new, useful words on the blackboard. To each student I shall assign three words. Write a sentence in your notebooks using each word. Make sure you have no mistakes. You may use your

dictionaries, if you wish. Then go to the board and copy your three sentences for class analysis."

The class was impressed and pleased. Miss Mitnick's ordinarily shy expression changed to one of eager expectancy. Mrs. Moskowitz, simple soul that she was, prepared her notebook with stolid solemnity. And Mr Kaplan, in the middle of the front row, took out his box of crayons, smiled more broadly than ever (a chance to use his crayons always intensified Mr. Kaplan's natural euphoria), turned to a fresh page in his notebook, and printed, slowly and with great love:

VOCABULARY

(Prectice in Book. Then Going to Blackb and putting on.)

by

H * Y * M * A * N K * A * P * L * A * N

For the title he chose purple crayon; for the methodological observation in parentheses, orange; for the "by," yellow. His name he printed, fondly, as always: in red and blue and flamboyant green. As he handled the crayons Mr. Kaplan smiled with the sweet serenity of one in direct communication with his Muse.

Mr. Parkhill assigned three words to each student and the beginners' grade went into action. Lips pursed, brows wrinkled, distant looks appeared in thoughtful eyes; heads were scratched, chins stroked, dictionaries fluttered. Mr. Kaplan tackled his three words with gusto: *pitcher*, *fascinate*, *university*. Mr. Parkhill noticed that Mr. Kaplan's cerebration was accompanied by strange sounds: he pronounced each word, and tried fitting it into a sentence, in a whisper which could be heard halfway across the room. He muttered the entire process of his reasoning. Mr. Kaplan, it seemed, thought only in dialogue with his other self. There was something uncanny about it.

"Pitcher . . . pitcher," Mr. Kaplan whispered. "Is

maybe a pitcher for milk? Is maybe a pitcher on de vall — art! Aha! Two minninks! 'Plizz take milk fromm de pitcher.' Fine! 'De pitcher hengs cockeye.' Also fine! Pitcher . . . pitcher."

This private colloquy was not indulged in without a subtle design, for Mr. Kaplan watched Mr. Parkhill's facial expressions carefully out of the corner of his eye as he whispered to himself. Mr. Kaplan hoped to discover which interpretation of "pitcher" was acceptable. But Mr. Parkhill had long ago learned to beware of Mr. Kaplan's strategies; he preserved a stern facial immobility as Mr. Kaplan's stage whispers floated through the classroom.

When Mr. Kaplan had finished his three sentences he re-read them proudly, nodded happily to Mr. Parkhill (who, though pretending to be watching Miss Schneiderman at the blackboard, was watching Mr. Kaplan out of the corner of *his* eye), and went to the board. He whispered the sentences aloud as he copied them. Ecstasy illuminated his face.

"Well," said Mr. Parkhill after all the students had transcribed their work, "let's start at this end. Mr. Bloom, I think?"

Mr. Bloom read his sentences quickly:

She *declined* the money
In her red hat she *falt* *conspicuous*
Last Saturday, I saw a *remarkable* show.

"Excellent!" said Mr. Parkhill. "Are there any questions?" There were no questions. Mr. Parkhill corrected "falt" and the exercise continued. On the whole, all went surprisingly well. Except for those of Mrs. Moskowitz, who worked havoc with "niggardly" ("It was a *niggardly* night"), the sentences were quite good. Mr. Parkhill was delighted. The experiment in vocabulary-building was proving a decided success. At last Mr. Kaplan's three sentences came up.

"Mr. Kaplan is next, I believe." There was a note of caution in Mr. Parkhill's voice.

Mr. Kaplan went to the board. "Mine foist void, ladies an' gentleman," he announced, smiling (Mr. Kaplan always did things with a certain bravado), "is 'pitcher.' So de sentence is: 'Oh, how beauriful is dis *pitcher*.'"

Mr. Parkhill saw that Mr. Kaplan had neatly straddled two words by a deliberately noncommittal usage. "Er — Mr. Kaplan. The word is 'p-i-t-c-h-e-r,' not 'p-i-c-t-u-r-e.'"

Too late did Mr. Parkhill realize that he had given Mr. Kaplan the clue he had been seeking.

"Mr. Pockheel," Mr. Kaplan replied with consummate simplicity, "dis void is 'p-i-t-c-h-e-r.'"

"But when you say, 'Oh, how *beautiful* this pitcher is,'" said Mr. Parkhill, determined to force Mr. Kaplan to the wall, "you suggest —"

"Ah!" Mr. Kaplan murmured, with a tolerant smile. "In som houses is even de *pitchers* beauriful."

"Read your next sentence, Mr. Kaplan."

Mr. Kaplan went on, smiling. "De sacond void, ladies an' gantlemán, is 'fascinate' — an' believe me is a planty hod void! So is mine santence: 'In India is all kinds snake-fescinators.'"

"You are thinking of *snake-charmers*." (Mr. Kaplan seemed to have taken the dictionary's description of "fascinate" too literally.) "Try 'fascinate' in another sentence, please."

Mr. Kaplan gazed ceilingward with a masterful insouciance, one eye half-closed. Then he ventured: "You *fescinate* me."

Mr. Parkhill hurried Mr. Kaplan on to his last word.

"Toid void, faller students, is 'univoisity.' De santence usink dis void: 'Elaven yiss is married mine vife an' mine-self, so is time commink for our tvalft *univoisity*.'

It was the opportunity for which Miss Mitnick had been

waiting. "Mr. Kaplan mixes up two words," she said. "He means 'anniversary.' 'University' is a high college — the *highest* college."

Mr. Kaplan listened to this unwelcome correction with a fine sufferance. Then he arched his eyebrows and said, "You got right, Mitnick. Hau Kay! So I'll givink anodder sentence: 'Som pipple didn't have aducation in a *univoisity*'" — he glanced meaningfully at Miss Mitnick — "but just de same, dey havink after elaven yiss de tvalft *annivoisery*."

With this retort courteous Mr. Kaplan took his seat. Through the next few recitations he was strangely silent. He did not bother to offer a correction of Miss Kowalski's spectacular misuse of "guess." ("Turn out the guess.") He did not as much as volunteer an opinion on Miss Hirschfield's "The cat omits a cry." For all his proud smile it was clear that Mr. Kaplan had suffered a deep hurt: like a smoldering cinder in his soul lay the thought of his humiliation at the mundane hands of one Rose Mitnick. He smiled as bravely as ever, but his silence was ominous. He seemed to be waiting, waiting. . . .

"Miss Mitnick, please," said Mr. Parkhill. A flame leaped into Mr. Kaplan's eyes.

Miss Mitnick's first sentence was "*Enamel* is used for painting chairs." Before she could read it Mr. Kaplan's voice rang out in triumph.

"Mistake by Mitnick! Ha! Mit *enimals* she is painting chairs? Ha!"

"The word is '*enamel*,'" said Mr. Parkhill coldly. "Not 'animal.'"

Rebuffed, Mr. Kaplan let Miss Mitnick's reading of that sentence, and her next, go unchallenged. But the flame burned in his eyes again when she read her final effort: "The prisoner stood in the *dock*."

"Well," suggested Mr. Parkhill, before Mr. Kaplan, squirming with excitement in his chair, could offer a rash cor-

rection, "that's one way to use the word. The English use it that way. But there is a — er — more common usage. Can you use 'dock' in a more familiar meaning, Miss Mitnick?"

Miss Mitnick was silent.

"Anyone?"

"I like roast *duck!*" cried Mr. Kaplan promptly.

"*Dock!*" Mr. Parkhill said severely. "Not *duck!*" Once again Mr. Kaplan bowed to a cruel fate.

"'Dock' isn't hard," said Mr. Parkhill encouragingly. "I'll give you a hint, class. Each of you, in coming to America, has had *direct experience with a dock.*" He smiled almost gaily, and waited.

The class went into that coma which signified thought, searching its collective memory of "coming to America." Mrs. Moskowitz closed her eyes as the recollection of her seasickness surged over her like a wave, and searched her memory no more. Mr. Kaplan, desperate to make the kill, whispered his associations tensely: "'Dock' . . . Commink to America . . . boat . . . feesh . . . big vaves . . . cremps."

It was clear they were getting nowhere. (Mr. Norman Bloom, indeed, had forgotten all about "dock" in his sweet recollection of the pinochle game on the boat when he had won four and a half dollars.)

"Well, I'll make it even easier," said Mr. Parkhill lightly. "Where did your boats *land?*"

"New York!" cried Mr. Kaplan eagerly.

Mr. Parkhill cleared his throat. "Yes — of course. But I mean —"

A cry of joy came from the lips of Hyman Kaplan. "I got him! Ufcawss! '*Dock!*' Plain an' tsimple! Ha!" He shot a look of triumph toward Miss Mitnick. "I'm soprise so high-cless a student like Mitnick, she knows all abot fency voids like 'univoisities' and 'annivoiseries,' she shouldn't know a leetle void like 'dock'!"

Something in Mr. Parkhill warned him. Not for a moment could he believe that Mr. Kaplan's confidence and enthusiasm were authentic indications of a correct answer. Mr. Parkhill would have preferred that some other student try a sentence with "dock." But no one volunteered.

"Very well, Mr. Kaplan," he said, staring at his fingers, as if to break the impact of Mr. Kaplan's contribution.

Mr. Kaplan rose, inspiration in his eyes. His smile was so wide that his face seemed to be one ecstatic cavern. He cast majestic glances to both sides, as if reading the tribute in the faces of his fellow students. Then he said, in one triumphant breath, "Hollo, Doc!"

Peace fell upon the room. Through the windows, from far away, there came the muted rumble of the Third Avenue elevated. The features of Abraham Lincoln on the wall took on, somehow, a softer understanding. But Mr. Parkhill was aware only of a strange and unaccountable ringing in his ears ("Hello, Doc!" . . . "Hello, Doc!") and, while shaking his head sadly to show Mr. Kaplan that he was wrong, he thought to himself with feverish persistence, "Vocabulary. Above all, vocabulary."

* * *

LEONARD Q. ROSS is a mystery man. He is almost as surprising as that creation of his ready pen, H*Y*M*A*N K*A*P*L*A*N. Mr. K*A*P*L*A*N is not entirely a creation, either, for his sponsor, Mr. Ross, actually did teach adult immigrants in a night school and drew his characters more or less from life. It was in the *New Yorker* that the astonishing Mr. K*A*P*L*A*N first made his appearance and immediately attracted a wide and sympathetic audience.

And now for the mystery. Leonard Q. Ross is really Leo Calvin Rosten in disguise. He is a Doctor of Philosophy from the University of Chicago, a fact which may come as a shock to those who believe that professors are distressingly dull and lacking in humor.

The Ones Who Brought Dreams

In the great days of immigration, before the quota system was adopted, every boat that came from Europe brought its load of immigrants, frightened often and bewildered, but with their eyes bright with dreams of what they would do in this wonderful new world. "The Citizen" is a story of a brave man who followed his dream over land and sea until it brought him to America.

THE CITIZEN

by JAMES FRANCIS DWYER

The President of the United States was speaking. His audience comprised two thousand foreign-born men who had just been admitted to citizenship. They listened intently, their faces, aglow with the light of a new-born patriotism, upturned to the calm, intellectual face of the first citizen of the country they now claimed as their own.

Here and there among the newly made citizens were wives and children. The women were proud of their men. They looked at them from time to time, their faces showing pride and awe.

One little woman, sitting immediately in front of the President, held the hand of a big, muscular man and stroked it softly. The big man was looking at the speaker with great blue eyes that were the eyes of a dreamer.

The President's words came clear and distinct:

You were drawn across the ocean by some beckoning finger of hope, by some belief, by some vision of a new kind of justice, by some expectation of a better kind of life. You dreamed dreams of this country, and I hope you brought the dreams with you. A man enriches the country to which he brings dreams, and you who have brought them have enriched America.

The big man made a curious choking noise and his wife breathed a soft "Hush!" The giant was strangely affected.

The President continued:

No doubt you have been disappointed in some of us, but remember this, if we have grown at all poor in the ideal, you brought some of it with you. A man does not go out to seek the thing that is not in him. A man does not hope for the thing that he does not believe in, and if some of us have forgotten what America believed in, you at any rate imported in your own hearts a renewal of the belief. Each of you, I am sure, brought a dream, a glorious, shining dream, a dream worth more than gold or silver, and that is the reason that I, for one, make you welcome.

The big man's eyes were fixed. His wife shook him gently, but he did not heed her. He was looking through the presidential rostrum, through the big buildings behind it, looking out over leagues of space to a snow-swept village that huddled on an island in the Beresina, the swift-flowing tributary of the mighty Dnieper, an island that looked like a black bone stuck tight in the maw of the stream.

It was in the little village on the Beresina that the Dream came to Ivan Berloff, Big Ivan of the Bridge.

The Dream came in the spring. All great dreams come in the spring, and the Spring Maiden who brought Big Ivan's Dream was more than ordinarily beautiful. She swept up the Beresina, trailing wondrous draperies of vivid green. Her feet touched the snow-hardened ground, and armies of little white and blue flowers sprang up in her footsteps. Soft breezes escorted her, velvety breezes that carried the aromas of the far-off places from which they came, places far to the southward, and more distant towns beyond the Black Sea whose people were not under the sway of the Great Czar.

The father of Big Ivan, who had fought under Prince Menshikov at Alma fifty-five years before, hobbled out to see the sunbeams eat up the snow hummocks that hid in the shady places, and he told his son it was the most wonderful spring he had ever seen.

“The little breezes are hot and sweet,” he said, sniffing

hungrily with his face turned toward the south. "I know them, Ivan! I know them! They have the spice odor that I sniffed on the winds that came to us when we lay in the trenches at Balaklava. Praise God for the warmth!"

And that day the Dream came to Big Ivan as he plowed. It was a wonder dream. It sprang into his brain as he walked behind the plow, and for a few minutes he quivered as the big bridge quivers when the Beresina sends her ice squadrons to hammer the arches. It made his heart pound mightily, and his lips and throat became very dry.

Big Ivan stopped at the end of the furrow and tried to discover what had brought the Dream. Where had it come from? Why had it clutched him so suddenly? Was he the only man in the village to whom it had come?

Like his father, he sniffed the sweet-smelling breezes. He thrust his great hands into the sunbeams. He reached down and plucked one of a bunch of white flowers that had sprung up overnight. The Dream was born of the breezes and the sunshine and the spring flowers. It came from them and it had sprung into his mind because he was young and strong. He knew! It couldn't come to his father or Donkov, the tailor, or Poborino, the smith. They were old and weak, and Ivan's dream was one that called for youth and strength.

"Ay, for youth and strength," he muttered as he gripped the plow. "And I have it!"

That evening Big Ivan of the Bridge spoke to his wife, Anna, a little woman, who had a sweet face and a wealth of fair hair.

"Wife, we are going away from here," he said.

"Where are we going, Ivan?" she asked.

"Where do you think, Anna?" he said, looking down at her as she stood by his side.

"To Bobruisk," she murmured.

"No."

"Farther?"

"Ay, a long way farther."

Fear sprang into her soft eyes. Bobruisk was eighty-nine versts away, yet Ivan said they were going farther.

"We — we are not going to Minsk?" she cried.

"Ay, and beyond Minsk!"

"Ivan, tell me!" she gasped. "Tell me where we are going!"

"We are going to America."

"To America?"

"Yes, to America!"

Big Ivan of the Bridge lifted up his voice when he cried out the words "To America," and then a sudden fear sprang upon him as those words dashed through the little window out into the darkness of the village street. Was he mad? America was 8,000 versts away! It was far across the ocean, a place that was only a name to him, a place where he knew no one. He wondered in the strange little silence that followed his words if the crippled son of Poborino, the smith, had heard him. The cripple would jeer at him if the night wind had carried the words to his ear.

Anna remained staring at her big husband for a few minutes, then she sat down quietly at his side. There was a strange look in his big blue eyes, the look of a man to whom has come a vision, the look which came into the eyes of those shepherds of Judea long, long ago.

"What is it, Ivan?" she murmured softly, patting his big hand. "Tell me."

And Big Ivan of the Bridge, slow of tongue, told of the Dream. To no one else would he have told it. Anna understood. She had a way of patting his hands and saying soft things when his tongue could not find words to express his thoughts.

Ivan told how the Dream had come to him as he plowed. He told her how it had sprung upon him, a wonderful dream born of the soft breezes, of the sunshine, of the sweet smell

of the upturned sod and of his own strength. "It wouldn't come to weak men," he said, baring an arm that showed great snaky muscles rippling beneath the clear skin. "It is a dream that comes only to those who are strong and those who want — who want something that they haven't got." Then in a lower voice he said: "What is it that we want, Anna?"

The little wife looked out into the darkness with fear-filled eyes. There were spies even there in that little village on the Beresina, and it was dangerous to say words that might be construed into a reflection on the Government. But she answered Ivan. She stooped and whispered one word into his ear, and he slapped his thigh with his big hand.

"Ay," he cried. "That is what we want! You and I and millions like us want it, and over there, Anna, over there we will get it. It is the country where a muzhik is as good as a prince of the blood!"

Anna stood up, took a small earthenware jar from a side shelf, dusted it carefully and placed it upon the mantel. From a knotted cloth about her neck she took a ruble and dropped the coin into the jar. Big Ivan looked at her curiously.

"It is to make legs for your Dream," she explained. "It is many versts to America, and one rides on rubles."

"You are a good wife," he said. "I was afraid that you might laugh at me."

"It is a great dream," she murmured. "Come, we will go to sleep."

The Dream maddened Ivan during the days that followed. It pounded within his brain as he followed the plow. It bred a discontent that made him hate the little village, the swift-flowing Beresina and the gray stretches that ran toward Mogilev. He wanted to be moving, but Anna had said that one rode on rubles, and rubles were hard to find.

And in some mysterious way the village became aware of the secret. Donkov, the tailor, discovered it. Donkov lived

in one half of the cottage occupied by Ivan and Anna, and Donkov had long ears. The tailor spread the news, and Poborino, the smith, and Yanansk, the baker, would jeer at Ivan as he passed.

“When are you going to America?” they would ask.

“Soon,” Ivan would answer.

“Take us with you!” they would cry in chorus.

“It is no place for cowards,” Ivan would answer. “It is a long way, and only brave men can make the journey.”

“Are you brave?” the baker screamed one day as he went by.

“I am brave enough to want liberty!” cried Ivan angrily.

“I am brave enough to want —”

“Be careful! Be careful!” interrupted the smith. “A long tongue has given many a man a train journey that he never expected.”

That night Ivan and Anna counted the rubles in the earthenware pot. The giant looked down at his wife with a gloomy face, but she smiled and patted his hand.

“It is slow work,” he said.

“We must be patient,” she answered. “You have the Dream.”

“Ay,” he said. “I have the Dream.”

Through the hot, languorous summertime the Dream grew within the brain of Big Ivan. He saw visions in the smoky haze that hung above the Beresina. At times he would stand, hoe in hand, and look toward the west, the wonderful west into which the sun slipped down each evening like a coin dropped from the fingers of the dying day.

Autumn came, and the fretful whining winds that came down from the north chilled the Dream. The winds whispered of the coming of the Snow King, and the river grumbled as it listened. Big Ivan kept out of the way of Poborino, the smith, and Yanansk, the baker. The Dream was still with him, but autumn is a bad time for dreams.

Winter came, and the Dream weakened. It was only the earthenware pot that kept it alive, the pot into which the industrious Anna put every coin that could be spared. Often Big Ivan would stare at the pot as he sat beside the stove. The pot was the cord which kept the Dream alive.

"You are a good woman, Anna," Ivan would say again and again. "It was you who thought of saving the rubles."

"But it was you who dreamed," she would answer. "Wait for the spring, husband mine. Wait."

It was strange how the spring came to the Beresina that year. It sprang upon the flanks of winter before the Ice King had given the order to retreat into the fastnesses of the north. It swept up the river escorted by a million little breezes, and housewives opened their windows and peered out with surprise upon their faces. A wonderful guest had come to them and found them unprepared.

Big Ivan of the Bridge was fixing a fence in the meadow on the morning the Spring Maiden reached the village. For a little while he was not aware of her arrival. His mind was upon his work, but suddenly he discovered that he was hot, and he took off his overcoat. He turned to hang the coat upon a bush, then he sniffed the air, and a puzzled look came upon his face. He sniffed again, hurriedly, hungrily. He drew in great breaths of it, and his eyes shone with a strange light. It was wonderful air. It brought life to the Dream. It rose up within him, ten times more lusty than on the day it was born, and his limbs trembled as he drew in the hot, scented breezes that breed the *Wanderlust* and shorten the long trails of the world.

Big Ivan clutched his coat and ran to the little cottage. He burst through the door, startling Anna, who was busy with her housework.

"The Spring!" he cried. "The Spring!"

He took her arm and dragged her to the door. Standing together they sniffed the sweet breezes. In silence they lis-

tened to the song of the river. The Beresina had changed from a whining, fretful tune into a lilting, sweet song that would set the legs of lovers dancing. Anna pointed to a green bud on a bush beside the door.

"It came this minute," she murmured.

"Yes," said Ivan. "The little fairies brought it there to show us that spring has come to stay."

Together they turned and walked to the mantel. Big Ivan took up the earthenware pot, carried it to the table, and spilled its contents upon the well-scrubbed boards. He counted while Anna stood beside him, her fingers clutching his coarse blouse. It was a slow business, because Ivan's big blunt fingers were not used to such work, but it was over at last. He stacked the coins into neat piles, then he straightened himself and turned to the woman at his side.

"It is enough," he said quietly. "We will go at once. If it was not enough, we would have to go because the Dream is upon me and I hate this place."

"As you say," murmured Anna. "The wife of Littin, the butcher, will buy our chairs and our bed. I spoke to her yesterday."

Poborino, the smith; his crippled son; Yanansk, the baker; Dankov, the tailor, and a score of others were out upon the village street on the morning that Big Ivan and Anna set out. They were inclined to jeer at Ivan, but something upon the face of the giant made them afraid. Hand in hand the big man and his wife walked down the street, their faces turned toward Bobruisk, Ivan balancing upon his head a heavy trunk that no other man in the village could have lifted.

At the end of the street a stripling with bright eyes and yellow curls clutched the hand of Ivan and looked into his face.

"I know what is sending you," he cried.

"Ay, *you* know," said Ivan, looking into the eyes of the other.

"It came to me yesterday," murmured the stripling. "I got it from the breezes. They are free, so are the birds and the little clouds and the river. I wish I could go."

"Keep your dream," said Ivan softly. "Nurse it, for it is the dream of a man."

Anna, who was crying softly, touched the blouse of the boy. "At the back of our cottage, near the bush that bears the red berries, a pot is buried," she said. "Dig it up and take it home with you and when you have a kopeck drop it in. It is a good pot."

The stripling understood. He stooped and kissed the hand of Anna, and Big Ivan patted him upon the back. They were brother dreamers and they understood each other.

Boris Lughan has sung the song of the versts that eat up one's courage as well as the leather of one's shoes.

"Versts! Versts! Scores and scores of them!
Versts! Versts! A million or more of them!
Dust! Dust! And the devils who play in it,
Blinding us fools who forever must stay in it."

Big Ivan and Anna faced the long versts to Bobruisk, but they were not afraid of the dust devils. They had the Dream. It made their hearts light and took the weary feeling from their feet. They were on their way. America was a long, long journey, but they had started, and every verst they covered lessened the number that lay between them and the Promised Land.

"I am glad the boy spoke to us," said Anna.

"And I'm glad," said Ivan. "Some day he will come and eat with us in America."

They came to Bobruisk. Holding hands, they walked into it late one afternoon. They were eighty-nine versts from the little village on the Beresina, but they were not afraid. The Dream spoke to Ivan, and his big hand held the hand of Anna. The railway ran through Bobruisk, and that evening

they stood and looked at the shining rails that went out in the moonlight like silver tongs reaching out for a low-hanging star.

And they came face to face with the Terror that evening, the Terror that had helped the spring breezes and the sunshine to plant the Dream in the brain of Big Ivan.

They were walking down a dark side street when they saw a score of men and women creep from the door of a squat, unpainted building. The little group remained on the sidewalk for a minute as if uncertain about the way they should go, then from the corner of the street came a cry of "Police!" and the twenty pedestrians ran in different directions.

It was no false alarm. Mounted police charged down the dark thoroughfares swinging their swords as they rode at the scurrying men and women who raced for shelter. Big Ivan dragged Anna into a doorway, and toward their hiding place ran a young boy who, like themselves, had no connection with the group and who merely desired to get out of harm's way till the storm was over.

The boy was not quick enough to escape the charge. A trooper pursued him, overtook him before he reached the sidewalk, and knocked him down with a quick stroke given with the flat of his blade. His horse struck the boy with one of his hoofs as the lad stumbled on his face.

Big Ivan growled like an angry bear, and sprang from his hiding place. The trooper's horse had carried him onto the sidewalk, and Ivan seized the bridle and flung the animal on its haunches. The policeman leaned forward to strike at the giant, but Ivan of the Bridge gripped the left leg of the horseman and tore him from the saddle.

The horse galloped off, leaving its rider lying beside the moaning boy who was unlucky enough to be in a street where a score of students were holding a meeting.

Anna dragged Ivan back into the passageway. More police

were charging down the street, and their position was a dangerous one.

“Ivan! ” she cried, “Ivan! Remember the Dream! America, Ivan! *America!* Come this way! Quick! ”

With strong hands she dragged him down the passage. It opened into a narrow lane, and, holding each other’s hands, they hurried toward the place where they had taken lodgings. From far off came screams and hoarse orders, curses, and the sound of galloping hoofs. The Terror was abroad.

Big Ivan spoke softly as they entered the little room they had taken. “He had a face like the boy to whom you gave the lucky pot,” he said. “Did you notice it in the moonlight when the trooper struck him down? ”

“Yes,” she answered. “I saw ”

They left Bobruisk next morning. They rode away on a great, puffing, snorting train that terrified Anna. The engineer turned a stopcock as they were passing the engine, and Anna screamed while Ivan nearly dropped the big trunk. The engineer grinned, but the giant looked up at him and the grin faded. Ivan of the Bridge was startled by the rush of hot steam, but he was afraid of no man.

The train went roaring by little villages and great pasture stretches. The real journey had begun. They began to love the powerful engine. It was eating up the versts at a tremendous rate. They looked at each other from time to time and smiled like two children.

They came to Minsk, the biggest town they had ever seen. They looked out from the car windows at the miles of wooden buildings, at the big church of St. Catharine, and the woolen mills. Minsk would have frightened them if they hadn’t had the Dream. The farther they went from the little village on the Beresina the more courage the Dream gave to them.

On and on went the train, the wheels singing the song of the road. Fellow travelers asked them where they were going. “To America,” Ivan would answer.

"To America?" they would cry. "May the little saints guide you. It is a long way, and you will be lonely."

"No, we shall not be lonely," Ivan would say.

"Ha! you are going with friends?"

"No, we have no friends, but we have something that keeps us from being lonely." And when Ivan would make that reply Anna would pat his hand and the questioner would wonder if it was a charm or a holy relic that the bright-eyed couple possessed.

They ran through Vilna, on through flat stretches of Courland to Libau, where they saw the sea. They sat and stared at it for a whole day, talking little but watching it with wide, wondering eyes. And they stared at the great ships that came rocking in from distant ports, their sides gray with the salt from the big combers which they had battled with.

No wonder this America of ours is big. We draw the brave ones from the old lands, the brave ones whose dreams are like the guiding sign that was given to the Israelites of old — a pillar of cloud by day, a pillar of fire by night.

The harbor master spoke to Ivan and Anna as they watched the restless waters.

"Where are you going, children?"

"To America," answered Ivan.

"A long way. Three ships bound for America went down last month."

"Our ship will not sink," said Ivan.

"Why?"

"Because I know it will not."

The harbor master looked at the strange blue eyes of the giant, and spoke softly. "You have the eyes of a man who sees things," he said. "There was a Norwegian sailor in the *White Queen*, who had eyes like yours, and he could see death."

"I see life!" said Ivan boldly. "A free life —"

"Hush!" said the harbor master. "Do not speak so

loud." He walked swiftly away, but he dropped a ruble into Anna's hand as he passed her by. "For luck," he murmured. "May the little saints look after you on the big waters."

They boarded the ship, and the Dream gave them a courage that surprised them. There were others going aboard, and Ivan and Anna felt that those others were also persons who possessed dreams. She saw the dreams in their eyes. There were Slavs, Poles, Letts, Jews, and Livonians, all bound for the land where dreams come true. They were a little afraid — not two per cent of them had ever seen a ship before — yet their dreams gave them courage.

The emigrant ship was dragged from her pier by a grunting tug and went floundering down the Baltic Sea. Night came down, and the devils who, according to the Estonian fishermen, live in the bottom of the Baltic, got their shoulders under the stern of the ship and tried to stand her on her head. They whipped up white combers that sprang on her flanks and tried to crush her, and the wind played a devil's lament in her rigging. Anna lay sick in the stuffy women's quarters, and Ivan could not get near her. But he sent her messages. He told her not to mind the sea devils, to think of the Dream, the Great Dream that would become real in the land to which they were bound. Ivan of the Bridge grew to full stature on that first night out from Libau. The battered old craft that carried him slouched before the waves that swept over her decks, but he was not afraid. Down among the million and one smells of the steerage he induced a thin-faced Livonian to play upon a mouth organ, and Big Ivan sang Paleer's "Song of Freedom" in a voice that drowned the creaking of the old vessel's timbers, and made the seasick ones forget their sickness. They sat up in their berths and joined in the chorus, their eyes shining brightly in the half gloom:

"Freedom for serf and for slave,
Freedom for all men who crave

Their right to be free
And who hate to bend knee
But to Him who this right to them gave."

It was well that these emigrants had dreams. They wanted them. The sea devils chased the lumbering steamer. They hung to her bows and pulled her for'ard deck under emerald-green rollers. They clung to her stern and hoisted her nose till Big Ivan thought that he could touch the door of heaven by standing on her blunt snout. Miserable, cold, ill, and sleepless, the emigrants crouched in their quarters, and to them Ivan and the thin-faced Livonian sang the "Song of Freedom."

The emigrant ship pounded through the Cattegat, swung southward through the Skagerrack and the bleak North Sea. But the storm pursued her. The big waves snarled and bit at her, and the captain and the chief officer consulted with each other. They decided to run into the Thames, and the harried steamer nosed her way in and anchored off Gravesend.

An examination was made, and the agents decided to tranship the emigrants. They were taken to London and thence by train to Liverpool, and Ivan and Anna sat again side by side, holding hands and smiling at each other as the third-class emigrant train from Euston raced down through the green Midland counties to grimy Liverpool.

"You are not afraid?" Ivan would say to her each time she looked at him.

"It is a long way, but the Dream has given me much courage," she said.

"Today I spoke to a Lett whose brother works in New York City," said the giant. "Do you know how much money he earns each day?"

"How much?" she questioned.

"Three rubles, and he calls the policemen by their first names."

"You will earn five rubles, my Ivan," she murmured.
"There is no one as strong as you."

Once again they were herded into the bowels of a big ship that steamed away through the fog banks of the Mersey out into the Irish Sea. There were more dreamers now, nine hundred of them, and Anna and Ivan were more comfortable. And these new emigrants, English, Irish, Scotch, French, and German, knew much concerning America. Ivan was certain that he would earn at least three rubles a day. He was very strong.

On the deck he defeated all comers in a tug of war, and the captain of the ship came up to him and felt his muscles.

"The country that lets men like you get away from it is run badly," he said. "Why did you leave it?"

The interpreter translated what the captain said, and through the interpreter Ivan answered.

"I had a Dream," he said, "a Dream of freedom."

"Good," cried the captain. "Why should a man with muscles like yours have his face ground into the dust?"

The soul of Big Ivan grew during those days. He felt himself a man, a man who was born upright to speak his thoughts without fear.

The ship rolled into Queenstown one bright morning, and Ivan and his nine hundred steerage companions crowded the for'ard deck. A boy in a rowboat threw a line to the deck, and after it had been fastened to a stanchion he came up hand over hand. The emigrants watched him curiously. An old woman sitting in the boat pulled off her shoes, sat in a loop of the rope, and lifted her hand as a signal to her son on deck.

"Hey, fellers," said the boy, "help me pull me muvver up. She wants to sell a few dozen apples, an' they won't let her up the gangway!"

Big Ivan didn't understand the words, but he guessed what the boy wanted. He made one of a half dozen who gripped

the rope and started to pull the ancient apple woman to the deck.

They had her halfway up the side when an undersized third officer discovered what they were doing. He called to a steward, and the steward sprang to obey.

“ Turn a hose on her ! ” cried the officer. “ Turn a hose on the old woman ! ”

The steward rushed for the hose. He ran with it to the side of the ship with the intention of squirting on the old woman, who was swinging in midair and exhorting the six men who were dragging her to the deck.

“ Pull ! ” she cried. “ Sure, I'll give every one of ye a rosy red apple an' me blessing with it.”

The steward aimed the muzzle of the hose, and Big Ivan of the Bridge let go of the rope and sprang at him. The fist of the great Russian went out like a battering ram ; it struck the steward between the eyes, and he dropped upon the deck. He lay like one dead, the muzzle of the hose wriggling from his limp hands.

The third officer and the interpreter rushed at Big Ivan, who stood erect, his hands clenched.

“ Ask the big swine why he did it,” roared the officer.

“ Because he is a coward ! ” cried Ivan. “ They wouldn't do that in America ! ”

“ What does the big brute know about America ? ” cried the officer.

“ Tell him I have dreamed of it,” shouted Ivan. “ Tell him it is in my Dream. Tell him I will kill him if he turns the water on this old woman.”

The apple seller was on deck then, and with the wisdom of the Celt she understood. She put her lean hand upon the great head of the Russian and blessed him in Gaelic. Ivan bowed before her, then as she offered him a rosy apple he led her toward Anna, a great Viking leading a withered old woman who walked with the grace of a duchess.

"Please don't touch him," she cried, turning to the officer. "We have been waiting for your ship for six hours, and we have only five dozen apples to sell. It's a great man he is. Sure he's as big as Finn MacCool."

Someone pulled the steward behind a ventilator and revived him by squirting him with water from the hose which he had tried to turn upon the old woman. The third officer slipped quietly away.

The Atlantic was kind to the ship that carried Ivan and Anna. Through sunny days they sat up on deck and watched the horizon. They wanted to be among those who would get the first glimpse of the wonderland.

They saw it on a morning with sunshine and soft wind. Standing together in the bow, they looked at the smear upon the horizon, and their eyes filled with tears. They forgot the long road to Bobruick, the rocking journey to Libau, the mad buckjumping boat in whose timbers the sea devils of the Baltic had bored holes. Everything unpleasant was forgotten, because the Dream filled them with a great happiness.

The inspectors at Ellis Island were interested in Ivan. They walked around him and prodded his muscles, and he smiled down upon them good-naturedly.

"A fine animal," said one. "Gee, he's a new white hope! Ask him can he fight?"

An interpreter put the question, and Ivan nodded. "I have fought," he said.

"Gee!" cried the inspector. "Ask him was it for purses or what?"

"For freedom," answered Ivan. "For freedom to stretch my legs and straighten my neck!"

Ivan and Anna left the Government ferryboat at the Battery. They started to walk uptown, making for the East Side, Ivan carrying the big trunk that no other man could lift.

It was a wonderful morning. The city was bathed in warm

sunshine, and the well-dressed men and women who crowded the sidewalks made the two immigrants think that it was a festival day. Ivan and Anna stared at each other in amazement. They had never seen such dresses as those worn by the smiling women who passed them by; they had never seen such well-groomed men.

"It is a feast day for certain," said Anna.

"They are dressed like princes and princesses," murmured Ivan. "There are no poor here, Anna. None."

Like two simple children, they walked along the streets of the City of Wonder. What a contrast it was to the gray, stupid towns where the Terror waited to spring upon the cowed people. In Bobruisk, Minsk, Vilna, and Libau the people were sullen and afraid. They walked in dread, but in the City of Wonder beside the glorious Hudson every person seemed happy and contented.

They lost their way, but they walked on, looking at the wonderful shop windows, the roaring elevated trains, and the huge skyscrapers. Hours afterward they found themselves in Fifth Avenue near Thirty-third Street, and there the miracle happened to the two Russian immigrants. It was a big miracle inasmuch as it proved the Dream a truth, a great truth.

Ivan and Anna attempted to cross the avenue, but they became confused in the snarl of traffic. They dodged backward and forward as the stream of automobiles swept by them. Anna screamed, and, in response to her scream, a traffic policeman, resplendent in a new uniform, rushed to her side. He took the arm of Anna and flung up a commanding hand. The charging autos halted. For five blocks north and south they jammed on the brakes when the unexpected interruption occurred, and Big Ivan gasped.

"Don't be flurried, little woman," said the cop. "Sure I can tame 'em by liftin' me hand."

Anna didn't understand what he said, but she knew it was

something nice by the manner in which his Irish eyes smiled down upon her. And in front of the waiting automobiles he led her with the same care that he would give to a duchess, while Ivan, carrying the big trunk, followed them, wondering much. Ivan's mind went back to Bobruisk on the night the Terror was abroad.

The policeman led Anna to the sidewalk, patted Ivan good-naturedly upon the shoulder, and then with a sharp whistle unloosed the waiting stream of cars that had been held up so that two Russian immigrants could cross the avenue.

Big Ivan of the Bridge took the trunk from his head and put it on the ground. He reached out his arms and folded Anna in a great embrace. His eyes were wet.

"The Dream is true!" he cried. "Did you see, Anna? We are as good as they! This is the land where a muzhik is as good as a prince of the blood!"

The President was nearing the close of his address. Anna shook Ivan, and Ivan came out of the trance which the President's words had brought upon him. He sat up and listened intently:

We grow great by dreams. All big men are dreamers. They see things in the soft haze of a spring day or in the red fire of a long winter's evening. Some of us let those great dreams die, but others nourish and protect them, nurse them through bad days till they bring them to the sunshine and light which come always to those who sincerely hope that their dreams will come true.

The President finished. For a moment he stood looking down at the faces turned up to him, and Big Ivan of the Bridge thought that the President smiled at him. Ivan seized Anna's hand and held it tight.

"He knew of my Dream!" he cried. "He knew of it. Did you hear what he said about the dreams of a spring day?"

"Of course he knew," said Anna. "He is the wisest man in America, where there are many wise men. Ivan, you are a citizen now."

"And you are a citizen, Anna."

The band started to play "My Country, 'Tis of Thee," and Ivan and Anna got to their feet. Standing side by side, holding hands, they joined in with the others who had found after long days of journeying the blessed land where dreams come true.

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JAMES FRANCIS DWYER is an American by adoption, an Australian by birth. He was born in Camden, New South Wales, April 22, 1874, received his education in the public schools there, entered newspaper work, and as a correspondent for Australian papers traveled extensively. He came to America in 1907 and made his home in New York City where he was a frequent contributor to *Collier's*, *Harper's Weekly*, the *American Magazine*, the *Ladies' Home Journal*, and other periodicals. He also published several books, nearly all dealing with the strange life of the Far East.

The story "The Citizen" had an interesting origin. On May 10, 1915, just after the sinking of the *Lusitania*, President Wilson went to Philadelphia to address a meeting of an unusual kind. Four thousand foreign-born men, who had just become naturalized citizens of our country, were to be welcomed to citizenship by the mayor of the city, a member of the Cabinet, and the President of the United States. The meeting was held in Convention Hall; more than fifteen thousand people were present, and the event, occurring as it did at a time when everyone realized that the loyalty of our people was likely to be soon put to the test, was one of historic importance. Moved by the significance of this event, Mr. Dwyer translated it into literature.

Of late years, Mr. Dwyer has lived abroad and was last known to be living in Pau, France.

American Heritage

Freedom is much in our minds these days. As, one by one, around the world the lights of liberty have flickered and gone out, quenched by a ruthless tyranny, we have come to look at our own bright-burning torch with new respect and fervent love. We are beginning to realize that this beautiful thing — this freedom — was bought for us with blood and sweat and bitter tears, and that we must be willing to pay a heavy price to keep it.

Joe Smith was a factory foreman, an ordinary man whose world was “ bounded on the north by the comic strips, on the east by the radio, on the south by the adventure magazines, and on the west by the screen.” No one would have picked him out for a hero, but when he had to choose between his own life and the betrayal of a government secret, Joe Smith discovered what it meant to him to be an American.

affairs of which Joe Smith heartily approved, just as he disapproved the ways of the foreign dictators and aggressors.

An engineer in Washington, a Colonel Glendiron, had worked out a simple but brilliant tool adaptation whereby, with a few slight alterations, machines used in the manufacture of certain types of steel tubing could be made to produce rifle barrels in quantity for the new semi-automatic weapon recently adopted by the army.

The invention was sufficiently important to be closely guarded, especially in its early stage, and the Acme Company, manufacturers of large quantities of steel tubing, was selected for the initial make-over experiments.

Joe Smith's mechanical genius and overlordship of every die and machine in the Acme factory made him an important cog in the scheme. He was, of course, proud of the trust reposed in him and did not even speak of the matter to Anna at home. He memorized the blueprint in three days, and his mind was chiefly occupied with and fascinated by the brilliance and simplicity of the adaptation.

At five minutes past eight Joe Smith put down his newspaper and arose from the breakfast table. His house was full of the comforting kind of noise to which he was accustomed. The radio was already on. The children were gabbling in the midst of breakfast, and from the kitchen came the sound of running water and dishes being washed.

Smith kissed Maybelle and Joe Junior on the tops of their heads, went to the kitchen door and said, "G'by, hon."

Anna was wearing a clean, blue-checked apron, her hair was tidy and she smelled of household soap. Hard work had aged her more than it had Joe, but her dark eyes were still beautiful.

She dried her hands quickly on a dish towel, came over to her husband, and they pecked at each other — the good-by

kiss of long habit. "Going to be late again tonight?" Anna asked

"I guess maybe. We're putting in a lot of new stuff."

She did not demur. The factory was *his* world. And besides, it meant overtime pay. She said, "I'll keep something hot for you."

Joe Smith went out into the sunshiny autumn morning. At many other houses up and down the block, doors were banging, too, as men and women emerged to go to work. He went to the garage, backed the car out carefully, pounded the horn button in two farewell honks and drove off.

His route, carefully calculated for speed and avoidance of traffic, was a detour skirting Brooklyn proper. It was always the same and landed him at the factory at ten minutes to nine.

Shortly before eight-thirty, Joe Smith was driving down Pascal Street in the vicinity of Cypress Hill Cemetery when a large limousine, containing two men in addition to the driver, came from behind him on the left and bore over, crowding him to the curb. By jamming on his brakes quickly, Smith managed to prevent a collision.

He leaned out of his window and bawled at what was apparently a careless driver. "Whatsa matter with you? Whyntcha look where you're goin'?"

This was the accepted beginning for all negotiations with drivers who displeased him. Smith knew his rights of the road and was not prepared to relinquish one iota of them.

The driver of the car leaned across to the open window and shouted, "Why you no look where you go? What you try do, run into me?"

The man spoke with a foreign accent that Smith could not place. Because he was well within his time limit for the factory, the temptation to put the fellow in his place was too great to be resisted, so he said, "Oh, yeah? A wise guy,

eh?" still in the accepted formula, almost as if he were repeating lines from a play.

The driver replied coolly, " You get outta that car, I show you who is a wise guy."

This was not according to script. There should have been more verbal exchange, after which they would have driven on. But there was an insolence about the other driver that caused a hard and bitter bead of anger to form at the core of Joe Smith. He jammed on his hand brake, snapped open the door of his car and piled out into the road. The other driver did the same. The two men remained in the rear of the car.

Smith doubled up his fists. The driver was taller than he, and heavier. Smith wasn't frightened, because part of his credo was that he could fight, though he had not been called upon to put up his fists since his high school days. He did not weigh more than a hundred and forty-five pounds, and although he was not corpulent, he had taken no exercise in fifteen years other than an occasional round of golf or an evening of bowling. He would clip this guy one on the jaw, get back in his car and drive off. But he should have noticed that the street was deserted and the nearest house a block away.

He said, " Okay. What are you going to show me? "

The driver made no reply. Instead, he stepped close with a catlike, gliding motion and smashed his left fist against the side of Smith's head in a whistling hook.

It caught Smith on the temple, stunning him and spinning him backwards, so that he would have fallen except that he crashed into the side of his own car and hung there, his legs trembling, the world spinning dizzily. Passion brought him back for a moment, and pushing off from the car, he hurled himself at his assailant, his arms flailing wildly.

The driver sidestepped and hit Smith again and again, though these blows he did not feel in the heat of the battle.

But he had not landed yet, and his own efforts were exhausting him. He had to sob to breathe, and there was a rasping flame burning in his chest. His arms were heavy with the pain of fatigue. Summoning his last reserves, he threw his right hand desperately at the chin of the other man. He missed, his arm going around the man's neck. Smith fell into him, clutching to hold and grapple with him. The driver brought his knee sharply up into Smith's groin.

Convulsed with agony, Joe Smith slid to his knees, retching and gasping. Blows knocked his head from side to side. Somehow, he retained consciousness long enough for one bewildered, gasping protest. "You're hitting a guy when he's down!"

Also, he was aware that the two other men were piling out of the car. He felt a shock that seemed to explode inside his head and bring down upon him a splintering, fire-streaked blackness which enveloped him in oblivion.

Joe Smith was not a stupid man. He knew that he was in a bad spot. He realized now that it was not an ordinary street fight in which he had become involved, but probably a snatch. Hard as it was for his aching, reeling head to summon consecutive thought, he even suspected that it might have something to do with the factory. But he did not for a moment doubt his ability to get out of it. For that was a part of his credo, too. His had been a world of clear-cut distinctions: the good, the bad; the hero, the villain; a world where right triumphed and was rewarded; where evil was invariably punished; where help came to the good in the nick of time.

He had been conscious for some minutes before his captors were aware of it. They were not looking when his eyes jerked open for the first time and took in the barren room and the men therein. He had shut them immediately and then stolen glimpses from beneath his lowered eyelids. He

had seen the figures of five men, a door, windows with shades drawn, a fireplace with a mantel, chairs, a table. There were no doubts as to his own position. He was seated in a straight-backed chair, his legs wired so that he could not move them. His wrists were joined together behind the chair and wired tightly.

In the make-believe world of Joe Smith, bounded on the north by the comic strips, on the east by the radio, on the south by the adventure magazines, and on the west by the screen, escape was always begun by the loosening of the bonds, carelessly tied.

He tried straining at his wrists and almost fainted from the pain in his arms. There was no strength in them, nor would the strength of ten have helped him. The copper wire, wound around and twisted, held them solidly. When he moved, the wire cut into his flesh. He knew that he didn't have a chance.

A sudden deluge of water struck him full in the face, making him choke, gasp and open his eyes. The man who had beaten him up in the street stood in front of him holding an empty pitcher. He said, "So you awake, eh?" All the other men in the room were looking at their prisoner. Smith stared back at them.

He had never seen any of them before. He tried to distinguish between them. One had very dark hair and a blue chin, and another was so blond that he seemed to have no lashes or eyebrows. His assailant had a broken nose. The fourth had a short gray beard and gold-rimmed spectacles, while the fifth was a huge bull of a man with a massive head and a cleft chin.

Dark Hair and No Lashes had heavy blue automatic pistols in their hands, from whose barrels protruded some kind of attachment. Smith had seen such things in pictures and knew they were silencers.

The room was illuminated by three electric globes in an

overhead chandelier, for, although it was daylight outside, the dark shades covered the windows. The men, with the exception of Broken Nose who was standing, were seated around a table. On the table, Smith could see paper, pencils, pens, a bottle of drafting ink, rulers, calipers and a T-square:

When they saw that he was conscious, the four began talking in a foreign language of which Smith could not understand a word. He gathered, however, that Cleft Chin was the leader of the group. They were all foreigners, including Broken Nose. Two of them, Black Hair and No Lashes, he now recognized as having been in the back of the car.

Cleft Chin slewed around in his chair and said, "You, Smit'! Listen to me careful. We going to untie you. You come over here and sit down. There will be a gun at the back of your neck. You drawing then the plans and specifications for the Glendiron Adapter. If you can't draw, you tell him there." He jerked his head in the direction of Gray Beard. "He is an engineer. You do that, and nothing happens to you. You try any monkey business, and you get it. Understand? And don't make any nonsense, because the engineer understands the business and we catch you, and when we catch you, you are sorry. You going to be reasonable, I think?"

The thing that puzzled Joe Smith was the absence of melodramatics. Except for Dark Hair and No Lashes holding the guns, which were not even pointed at him, they were all sitting like businessmen at a conference table. And Cleft Chin had spoken almost like one of the Acme engineers at the shop explaining something.

But Joe Smith could understand the things implied in the speech. These men were after the Glendiron Adapter. They knew who he, Smith, was. They were certain that he could supply them with what they wanted. Phrases whirled through his head: "National Defense Secrets." "Fifth Column."

It was Joe Smith who finally supplied the melodrama. He stared at Cleft Chin and said, " You can go to hell, you rat! "

Cleft Chin arose without a word. He came over to Joe Smith ; in his hand was a thick rubber truncheon with which he smashed Smith in the mouth.

The shock addled Smith's brains again, split his lip and shattered a tooth. Waves of pain coursed sickeningly through his head ; he spit out blood and the piece of tooth. There was a puzzled look, a look almost of childish bewilderment on his face, because he could not understand the brutal ferocity of the man who had struck him. He had forgotten his own sentence spoken so bravely, and he was trying to think why this had been done to him.

Cleft Chin sucked in his breath with a hissing sound, leaned down and struck with the truncheon again, but this time just above the shins, little flicking taps that turned into excruciating agony.

" Oh ! Oh, God ! Oh ! Don't hit me any more ! " cried Joe Smith. The shock of pain had cleared his head again, and he found himself doing two things at once: inwardly raging and scheming — the dirty, cowardly rats ; if he could get his hands on one of those guns he'd show them ! He'd kill the lot of them. Outwardly, he cried his hurt because he could not hold it in. " Oh, God ! Please don't hit me again."

Cleft Chin straightened up. He said, " You do what I say ? "

" Yes, yes. I'll do anything."

Cleft Chin spoke to Broken Nose in the strange language, and the man knelt down and loosed Smith's hands and legs. That was the way, thought Joe Smith. Get loose. Make them think he was going to tell them. Grab a gun and kill them all. Beat them ; that's how it was done.

His hands were loose, but he could not feel his fingers. Broken Nose yanked him to his feet and held him because

he could not stand alone. Dark Hair stood behind him, pressing the muzzle of the silencer into the back of his neck. Broken Nose led him to the table and let him slump into a chair. Gray Beard leaned forward, a blueprint in his hands. Joe Smith worked his fingers feebly to bring some feeling back into them.

What was it he must do? Turn the tables! Whirl like lightning! Snatch the gun! Cover them! Kill them if they moved! The moment would come. One spring, and . . .

The waves of pain shattered in his head again. His beaten legs were trembling and useless. The numbness had left his mouth, and the raw nerve of the shattered tooth was stabbing him with throbbing spasms.

Whirl, then! Spring! Snatch victory from defeat! With what? What was this monstrous lie of invincibility he had believed? Spring with this limp, broken, tortured thing that was his body? Do what heroes do? In God's name, how? For he had nothing left.

The papers blurred beneath his gaze, and he swayed but caught himself. He heard the harsh tones of Cleft Chin: "Come on! Begin!"

A curious accident happened, for it was nothing more. The weakness came again, and Joe Smith began to fall face forward onto the table.

Dark Hair snatched at him to hold him back, and Broken Nose did too, in a sharp movement that clashed against Dark Hair, so that his arm was jarred and the heavy automatic with the silencer attached clattered onto the table.

Hands and arms thudded onto the board in a wild scramble for it. But miraculously it was Joe Smith who got it first. And as his fingers closed around the butt, not only courage came back to him but strength, and he thrust himself violently backwards, knocking Dark Hair and Broken Nose aside.

Pure instinct was at work, urging him to put distance

between himself and his tormentors, and he ran, staggering on his weakened legs, to the wall on the other side of the room. He would have been shot by No Lashes during this flight, except that in the flurry of his getting hold of the gun, both Cleft Chin and Broken Nose had come between Smith and No Lashes, and the gunman had not dared to fire.

Joe Smith turned, gasping for breath, his legs trembling violently, his heart pounding. But he held the heavy pistol up before him, though his hand was shaking, and through his puffed and bleeding lips he said thickly, "All right, you rats! Stick 'em up!"

All right, you rats! Stick 'em up! That was what one said when one's hand held the compelling magic of a gat. All resistance must melt before this talisman, and arms must reach for the ceiling. Thus were the tables turned; so was victory snatched from defeat.

Yet this was not what Joe Smith saw. None of the men at the other end of the room had obeyed his command.

"Stick 'em up!" said Joe Smith again, but there was puzzled insistence rather than command in his voice. "Drop that gun and stick 'em up, or I'm goin' to give it to you." He pointed the weapon at the men and tried to hold it steady.

Cleft Chin gave a quiet command in the strange language to No Lashes. The blond man raised his gun.

Joe Smith gave a yell of fear. "All right, you rats, you asked for it!" He jerked wildly at the trigger to kill them all by the violence of his finger.

It was the first time Joe Smith had ever held a pistol in his hand. In the organization of his simple world, guns were owned by policemen, gangsters, and G-men. When guns barked, the righteous survived and the men of evil crumpled and fell. He had never questioned his own ability to handle a weapon. To shoot well was the gift of every American by right of inheritance. These were facts long recognized. He had never had any reason to doubt them.

His gun went "*Pcha! Pcha!*" and kicked violently upwards. Flakes of plaster and dust fell from the ceiling onto the table. None of the men stirred except No Lashes, who squeezed the trigger so that his gun likewise said "*Pcha!*" before Joe Smith could shoot again.

Fire seared through Smith's hand, and panic rose in suffocating waves. He realized that he had missed, and with his mind, he fired his gun again and again into the bodies of the men as they stormed toward him. But there was no noise except the trampling of their feet, because there was no longer any pistol in his shattered hand. It had been shot out of his grip and lay in a far corner.

Futilely, he tried to strike as the five poured over him, beating, clawing, and kicking at him. He received a heavy blow on the head and for the second time that day lost consciousness.

Joe Smith was revived by the powerful fumes from an ammonia bottle held beneath his nose and was brought sharply to a world of bitter truth and realism.

He was again lashed to the chair and, though his right hand was free, it was wrapped in a rough, thick bandage. He was surprised to note that his shoes had been removed, and that his feet were bare. His entire being seemed to be one taut, swollen mass of hurt.

As he revived, the door to the room was opened, and Cleft Chin came in. The other four were already there.

The opened door brought an instinctive reaction from Joe Smith. He yelled, "Help! Help! I'm — "

Dark Hair struck him across the face with a small piece of rubber hose. Joe Smith yelled no more. Dark Hair had his arm raised to strike again, but Cleft Chin stopped him.

The leader then came over to Joe Smith and said, "Don't be foolish. There is nobody here within a mile. You see

what happens when you make nonsense? We wanting nothing from you but the information of the adapter. You tell that to our engineer, and we let you go."

Joe Smith caught a glimpse of the dial on the wrist watch worn by Cleft Chin. The hands stood at ten minutes past twelve. Because of the light behind the shades, he knew it was noon. What had happened at the factory? Had they telephoned his home when he had not appeared by ten o'clock? Anna would have told them that he had started for work as usual. Then the search must already be on for him. He would be found and rescued. Yes, there was a chance for rescue, and his mind almost automatically formed the phrase, "in the nick of time."

Surely they would find his abandoned car. And then what? He knew suddenly that there would be no rescue. Joe Smith in those few terrible hours had learned much of the world of brutal realities. No one had seen the fight or the kidnaping. The men who had taken him must have planned with care. It might take days, even weeks to find him. And by that time . . .

"Well?" said Cleft Chin harshly. He had been talking, but Joe Smith had not been listening to him.

"What?" said Smith.

"The information. You giving it to us?"

The information! The Glendiron Adapter that would soon be turning out rifle barrels by the hundreds of thousands. They wanted him to give them the information, tell them how it was done. But that was a secret. That would be treason. What did they take him for, a skunk?

He said, "What if I won't?"

Cleft Chin nodded to No Lashes and said, "Show him!"

No Lashes came from behind the table. He had a nasty grin on his face. He held a large pair of broad-end garage pliers in his hand. He knelt and bent over Joe Smith's naked feet . . .

"Stop! Stop!" screamed Smith. "For God's sake, stop! I can't stand it! I can't stand it, I tell you."

No Lashes stood up. Cleft Chin said, "Now you know. That's nothing. We got worse. You want we show you?"

"No, no," Joe Smith moaned. A curious thing was happening to him. His outer mind that functioned from his ears and his eyes was so dulled and shocked from pain and beating that it seemed to take ages before words spoken to him reached his brain or he could speak in reply. But in the meantime, he seemed to be able to think a million thoughts at once in his inner mind — things that he had never thought of in his life before.

So this was what really happened to people who got into trouble. The pretty, heroic, pomaded men who romped through the pictures in polo shirts could fight gangsters and villains singlehanded and come through unharmed. Plain Joe Smith was broken, exhausted, incapable of further resistance, utterly helpless.

Helpless! Why was he helpless? Wasn't he an American? Wasn't that enough? He'd had them with a gun in his hand, and what had happened? He remembered. He had shot at them across the room and missed. Missed them when he had them cold!

Why had he never had a gun before? Why had he not been trained to play the man's game of defending himself and his own? Joe Smith's inner mind argued with himself.

"So," said Cleft Chin, "now you tell us what we want to know?"

The question came from far away and passed across Smith's mind like a slowly moving string of freight cars: "Tell — us — what — we — want — to — know."

Yes, tell them, and make an end to this. He wasn't prepared to fight these men from another world. No one had showed him how. These were not men as he had come to know men, but creatures from another planet, devils *who*

did not play the game. They had hit him when he was down; tortured him when he was tied and helpless. They would find out the secret anyway, sooner or later. If he told them, they would let him go and not hurt him any more.

What else could he do? He had fought them to the limit of his ability and had failed. Men had to be fit and trained to fight. They had to have hard bodies and tough minds. You didn't get a hard body going to the movies or bowling once a month or driving a car. What had his country done to protect him or make him fit to protect himself? He'd had enough. He'd had all he could stand.

"No, you rat," said Joe Smith. "I won't."

He had said no! He had heard himself say no, when he had intended to say yes. Which Joe Smith was it that had uttered still another defiance? Was it the one who sagged lashed to the chair, battered and beaten? Or was it a new and unrealized Joe Smith who lived deep inside the aching skull and who struggled and wrestled therein, like something newborn, striving to break out of its cocoon?

And what was it that wanted to break forth? What was there left of him? He did not understand this. He could have brought his pain to an end by yielding. It was what he wanted to do. He was no hero. He was just an ordinary guy, on whom a gang of thugs had put the snarl to force him to reveal the workings of a machine.

And so . . . And so something in him which he did not understand, a mad, perverse stubbornness that rose in him, would not let him give in.

Instead, he said thickly, "You can go to hell, you rat. I ain't tellin' you anything." He felt a swelling sensation of satisfaction within him that was almost anodyne to pain.

In all the naive and simple externals of his life, Joe Smith had not yet encountered or even thought upon the power and the beauty of the thing known as the spirit of man.

Cleft Chin gave a command in his language. No Lashes stepped forward eagerly again and knelt down. And Joe Smith learned what was meant by hell on earth.

He screamed for mercy until they taped his mouth. His nerves, attuned to degrees of pain, learned how to convey even greater agonies to his tortured brain. He gave up. He gave up a thousand times. When they stopped to question him, he nodded at last in assent because at that moment he could not do otherwise.

But when they removed the gag and pushed him roughly to the table, and Gray Beard took up drawing pen and T-square, Joe Smith whispered, "I ain't goin' to do it. I ain't goin' to do it."

It was at that point that Cleft Chin dropped his cold, businesslike calm and lost his temper. Curiously, the giant refrained from physical violence upon what was left of Joe Smith and instead began to scream at him, shaking his fist in Joe's face.

"You fool! Do you want us to kill you? Do you want to die? You fool! I tell you we kill you slowly so it takes you hours before you die. We won't leave an inch of skin on you. Go on, you fool, tell us what we want to know. You hear? You want we kill you?"

The last was shouted in a half-hysterical yell. It brought Joe Smith to for a moment so that he was able to look upon the black, half-crazed fury of Cleft Chin's distorted face with eyes that burned with discernment and determination.

"Yeah," he whispered. "That's what I want. You got to kill me."

For Joe Smith was no longer helpless, no longer without a weapon. It had been growing within him, and now that it had been shown to him in its simplicity and invincibility, it was clear at last.

He could die, and dying, keep from them the secret they so desperately wanted; take with him the final victory.

They would kill him, but in killing him they were beaten. With his last conscious thought, he would know that. Life! His life! Why had he clung to it so? There was no higher card in the deck. He held it in his hand. He laid it on the board. He could die, and this he chose to do.

He no longer feared the agonies he must endure before the end, for when it came, he would not have spoken, and safe in death, could never speak again. The wires and shackles would no longer bind him. He would have escaped. He would be free.

Free! For the first time in his life Joe Smith was close to understanding the meaning of the word "liberty." He had read it and used it a thousand times; had viewed it symbolized in a statue; had heard it bellowed at him from the radio; had learned in school that it was his birthright, bestowed upon him by those heroes of the past known as "our forefathers."

But now his spirit, facing death, was looking upon the truth that liberty was something irrevocably bound up with human dignity, though he could not have phrased it that way. He would have said, "No one's goin' to push me around."

Liberty, he knew now, was the last unassailable fortress and stronghold of man, for in the ultimate grave crisis he could choose to die for it. From this — the freedom of death and the disposition to seek it rather than yield to the brutal slavery of force — nothing in heaven or on earth could deter him.

It were better, he knew in this hour of understanding, to live proudly and to fight for it, but in the end, if there were failure, the victory would lie with the dead, not with the living.

"I ain't goin' to tell you," whispered Joe Smith again. "You can kill me." And he closed his lips and waited.

Raging, Cleft Chin himself went at the torture with every

refinement of ferocity to break the will of Joe Smith, American.

To escape the horrors of the physical agonies imposed upon him, Joe Smith fled wildly to the sanctuary of the mind. It was difficult at first because of what was being done to him, yet the way grew clearer as his thoughts progressed, and sometimes it seemed as if these men were not hurting him at all.

He thought of his children. The kids would be home from school for lunch. He did not see his home disrupted, as it must be by the mystery of his absence, but rather as he had known it on days when minor illnesses kept him at home.

Joe Junior and Maybelle would be sitting on opposite sides of the table, and Maybelle would have a colored ribbon in her straight brown hair. Anna would lean backwards from the kitchen so that she could see into the dining room and call, "Eat your vegetables, Joe. Hurry up!" He could hear the scraping of forks on plates, and he clung to the dear sound.

Now that he was never to see them again, he no longer thought of them as he had for so many years, simply as the kids. At the club, one said, "I've got a wife and kids," the way one said, "I've got a car." There they were. He had them. It was good living with them, but he had never thought about it. They had simply become a pleasant habit.

His mind, opened under the stress of his approaching end, unlocked impressions and tendernesses he had not known existed.

To him there came, as sharply as though the children were there, the sweet smell of fresh skin and recently ironed flannel as they came to say good night, bathed and in clean pajamas. He had been used to laying down his newspaper and pecking at them in return for their kisses and had never known how they had touched his heart.

He could think now of the sweet pressure of Maybelle's

arms around his neck, and in the thinking, the trusting tenderness of the two thin arms became sharper and more poignant than the thing these creatures were doing to him to unseal his lips.

He wondered how much he must endure before the end would come, and whether he could endure it. And to his expanding mind there came the knowledge that he must and would, because in his veins there ran the blood of others who had endured before him. Those long mysterious and abstract forefathers became something personal and intimate. Their obstinacy and tenacity and love of liberty were in his blood, and he was the survivor of them all. He was the living representative of an unbroken line that had battled out of the dark, prehistoric forests of Europe, down through countless ages to a free America, triumphing over every catastrophe of nature and man. Perhaps men of his blood had been tortured and had triumphed before him. There would be no defeat in death. Joe Junior and Maybelle were there.

It was curious that his mind did not take him a step farther to think that, perhaps, because of his sacrifice, because he had not yielded a secret that would help an enemy, the lives of his children would be the safer. It simply did not occur to him that this was a sacrifice.

Joe Smith re-created Anna, his wife, strongly in his mind now, in the increasing desperation of his search for ease, for his need of her was great. And now that he was come to the end, he knew that he had never loved her as he could love her now. For a moment, he visualized not her, but her blue-and-white checked apron, empty, smelling of celery and the scent she used. It was this that he held to his cheek and pressed to his lips as the symbol of the woman who somehow, without his knowledge, had grown to be the greater part of him.

Romance and glamour had faded as they had grown into man and wife. Anna's body, which had been so appealingly thin when he had first known her, had thickened with time

and children, and her skin had coarsened. But the roughness and the stoutness were now dearer and more yearned for than all her shining youth had been. .

Now, about to die, Joe Smith had a glimpse of the glamour and the glory of this wife. The thought of her work-lined cheek against his face, or the little smile he sometimes caught at the corners of her mouth when she was putting away the linen she had laundered and ironed for him, built her into a towering and loving goddess, against whom in this hour of anguish and brutal torture he could lean his battered head and, for a moment, find respite from pain.

Under the relentless hands of the men who knew no means to gain their ends but fear and force, Joe Smith grew weaker, as rage at impending defeat replaced the calculated brutality of their work. Several times his mind wandered, but he groped on hopefully, seeking the darkness that would end the journey. Old thoughts lost their power to heal him, and he was forced to grasp at new ones like a man climbing the face of a cliff where each new foothold crumbles away beneath him.

He thought of his country, which he had not found it possible to betray.

His weaving mind carried him back to public school, the kids all standing with their hands outstretched and the short, choppy chant of their voices in the pledge to the flag.

He could remember the words, and the effort to remember helped him again to bear what was going on.

“ I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the republic for which it stands, one nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.”

This he understood now, too. The expression “ I love my country ” was no longer just words but a deep, swelling, passionate feeling, as though he could have kissed the asphalt streets, the billboards, the brownstone house fronts, the rubble-strewn lots he used to pass.

Somehow, the Acme Company, the clanking, humming machine shop, old man Padson and the Glendiron Adapter had become confused. He could remember only that somehow his body had come to symbolize a shield that stood between many, many things that he dearly loved and the forces that sought to destroy them.

Liberty and justice for all! One nation, indivisible! People! The nice kid at the garage who fixed his car; the swell guys at the club; the gang at the factory; fat Bill Swoyer, his neighbor.

My country! My country, 'tis of thee! There was a song . . . He was back in assembly again, hearing the kids singing. How did the words go?

He was weak from loss of blood, and the words kept slipping away. He fought for them, one by one.

" My country, 'tis of thee,
Sweet land of liberty,
Of thee I sing . . .

I love thy rocks and rills,
Thy something wooded hills;
My heart with rapture thrills . . . "

The tape was violently ripped from his torn mouth, and from the distant pain-filled spaces floated the voice of Cleft Chin.

" You fool! You got enough? You hear me? You give in? This is your last chance. You telling us what we want to know? "

Joe Smith's lips moved. Cleft Chin bent down to catch his words.

" I love thy rocks and rills," Joe Smith was saying.

The last thing he remembered was the savage face of Cleft Chin thrust close to his, before, for the third time that awful day, the mercy of darkness rolled over him and swept him to peace..

Cool rain brought Joe Smith to the consciousness that he was not dead, nor was he any longer in the torture room. It was dark, and he was lying on the ground, and in the distance he could see the glimmer of a street lamp. He did not feel that he was bound except by stabbing pain. He could not move a limb or utter a sound. And yet he was alive and free.

A belated homegoer cutting across a vacant lot in East Brooklyn stumbled over his body, and Joe Smith heard him say, "Oh-oh, a drunk!"

But the man stopped and lighted a match to make certain, and in the flare Smith saw a rugged face go white, heard a gasp and a cry.

The homegoer was level-headed. He ran across the lot to the nearest house that showed a light in the living room, knocked on the door and begged to use the telephone.

A few minutes later a police car tore around the corner and screeched to a stop, and shortly after, an ambulance also arrived.

The interne pushed through the crowd that had gathered and knelt at Joe Smith's side, while policemen held flash-lights. The interne was young, but intelligent, skilled and full of pity.

Kneeling there in the rain, he did things for Joe Smith that saved his life and the use of his limbs. When he was done, he patted Joe on the shoulder and said, "You're going to be all right, old fellow," and jabbed him mercifully with a morphine needle.

Two policemen placed him on the stretcher and loaded him into the ambulance.

The morphine began to work slowly attacking first the hot, throbbing pain centers, soothing, cooling, numbing them, leaving Joe's mind free. And as the ambulance raced along the rain-blackened streets toward comfort, care and peace, Joe Smith had for a moment a strange, queer vision of things to come.

He knew that he was not going to die ; that he would suffer much, but that his wounds would heal in time. The brutes had either not dared or not troubled to kill him. He understood that he had beaten them ; that somehow he had won, and winning was returning to the world he had thought to leave forever. He would see Anna and the kids again, and all those dear things that had been lost to him.

And in the clear insight of his vision, Joe Smith was frightened because the world to which he was returning was not the one that he had left. In this new world, the shoddy fabrics of his old beliefs were shot through with gleaming threads of truth and understanding. Nothing in it would ever be the same again, nor would he. He had not thought to pray during the time of battle, but now, in victory, he spoke a prayer that those truths and loves that he had found in the depths of his suffering might remain to him and light his way forever.



PAUL GALLICO was finally located in Hollywood after a frenzied pursuit from " coast to coast." Writing upon stationery headed Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer he says :

I was born in New York City in 1897 of Italian parentage. My father was Paolo Gallico, a pianist and composer who came to America in 1896, and is now a naturalized American citizen.

I went to public school in New York, to De Witt Clinton High School and was graduated from Columbia University in 1921 with a B S. degree. During the World War, I served with the United States Navy.

Became sports columnist and sports editor for the New York Daily News, during which time I promoted the Golden Gloves amateur boxing tourney and many other amateur sports such as swimming, canoeing, skating, etc.

Have traveled extensively in Europe, Mexico, South Amer-

ica, and the United States. Would rather travel than do anything, I guess.

Quit sports writing in 1936 to take a fling at fiction writing. Have been doing it ever since.

Because I have lived and traveled so much in Europe I feel I know more than many who live here, the blessings of this country and I would like with fiction somehow to make other Americans appreciate their own country and how very worth fighting for it is.

I have a home in England, in South Devonshire on the English Channel, and a farm in New Jersey.

It would probably amuse young people to know that I got my start as a sports editor and sports columnist when I first joined the News, by putting on the gloves with Jack Dempsey when he was training for his fight with Gene Tunney. I wanted to write a story on how it felt to fight with a champion. I found out. I got flattened. But the story I wrote made a little stir, and my publisher made me sports editor and columnist for it.

With regard to his farm, Mr. Gallico wrote to the *Saturday Evening Post* soon after acquiring it:

The property has an old stone house in three sections, five fireplaces, open timbers, and a ghost which I am hoping to sell to the Saturday Evening Post in six installments . . . Looking forward to seeing you around the cracker barrel down to the general store, I am

*Agriculturally yours,
Farmer Gallico.*

If you would like to read another tale of heroism written by Mr. Gallico, ask your librarian for *The Snow Goose*, the story of an unusual rescue during the evacuation of English soldiers from Dunkirk.

TALKING THINGS OVER

ONE of the pleasant characteristics of imaginative writing like fiction and poetry is that it does not necessarily mean the same thing to any two persons. It may not even mean the same thing to one person at different stages of his experience. Our enjoyment of any poem or story depends very largely upon what we bring to it ourselves in the way of experience and sympathetic imagination. One of the best ways of enjoying any piece of creative work, whether it is a picture, a play, a piece of writing, or a musical composition, is to talk it over with other people. In this way, the opinions and experiences of others supplement our own reactions to the work with ideas that might never have occurred to us had we been left to ourselves. There is, moreover, a certain social advantage in being able to discuss popular novels or current magazine stories. People who can talk about something other than the weather and petty gossip are a welcome relief to a hostess and make life more entertaining for themselves as well as for others. The gift of easy conversation and courteous discussion is a vocational asset in many professions. High school is a good place to lay the foundation for future successes; even if you never turn out to be brilliant or successful, however, you can at least sound intelligent. It is not *too* difficult; try it and see.

A MOTHER IN MANNVILLE

INTEGRITY is one of the most beautiful words in the language. Can you remember Mrs. Rawlings's definition of it? Where does it come from? Does one inherit it or get it from

one's environment? Think over all the people that you know or know about — friends, relatives, people in public life. In how many do you find complete integrity? How many are absolutely trustworthy? What great name in American history occurs to you at once? Most people would probably agree that integrity is one of the most desirable characteristics. Why is it that so few possess it? What price must one pay for it?

Why do you think that Jerry invented the story of a mother? What other characteristics did he possess in addition to integrity? Would you call his invention of a mother and skates lying? How do you account for it?

You have probably read other stories of orphanages. Very little is said directly of the one in this story, but did you learn anything about it other than what the author tells us? What is it that no institution, no matter how well run, can do for those who live in it? How would a dog help Jerry?

Did you learn anything about the writer as you read the story? Does the story sound like a true one? What gives it an air of reality? Someone actually wrote to Mrs. Rawlings and asked, "How *could* you go away and leave that little boy?" What would be your answer to that?

Here are several interesting words and combinations of words; can you make them part of your vocabulary by using them correctly? Note how they are used in the story.

mangled and inadequate
consistent rain
suffused glory
passionate resentment

savoring the memory
anomalous relation
common ecstasy
vermillion maple leaves

JUDGE

YOU have already heard something about integrity. Jerry, in "A Mother in Mannville," had that quality in a high degree. How about John in this story? Why would he and Jerry have understood each other?

"A Mother in Mannville" is less a short story than a character sketch. It has no particular plot or pattern, but "Judge," you may have noted, has all the characteristics of a novel. In fact, it could well have been expanded into one. There is the definite progression of a character from one point to another; in this case from boyhood well into manhood. There are a sufficient number of problems and complications to give a definite plot, and the element of suspense is so well managed that the reader arrives at the very last paragraph still fiercely angry at the meanness of the Judge. Even then, did you find that you had to think the whole story over in the light of that astonishing letter in order to stop being angry?

Parents and older people in these days are accused of too great leniency toward children. Yours is said to be a soft generation — you can't "take it." What do you think? In the case of John, the hard, uncompromising treatment made a man of him. Of course he had good stuff in him to begin with. What would your parents do if you so painfully tried to pay back money they had given you? What would you do if the child who tried were your own?

If your father should die with a debt against him, would you feel obliged to pay it even if paying involved much sacrifice? What is a debt of honor? Do you know of any instances in which a man has unwittingly contracted a debt for a dishonest friend or relative and has paid in full? Is such a man a fool or a hero?

There is another interesting aspect to this story. You noticed how John grew up over night when he had to assume responsibility. Did you also notice the slow steady growth in the family fortunes and the change in social status as independence and self-respect replaced shiftlessness and debt?

The Judge was a man of few words, but what he said was usually worth remembering. Can you quote two or three of the remarks that spurred John on to success? Was the

Judge really a hard man? Do you think that being so severe with John cost him anything? What do you think of him, anyway?

Be on the lookout for novels and stories by Walter D. Edmonds. You know now that he is interesting and readable. Watch for his stories in the movies, too.

THE MAN OF THE FAMILY

GERALD RAYBURN has several things in common with John Haskell and Jerry, the boy from the orphanage. What are they?

What kind of people are Floyd Oberholzer and his wife? What characteristics do they display in their treatment of Gerald? Why do they find it so difficult to deal with him? Can you explain Gerald's apparent surliness?

Gerald's feelings were almost as mixed as those of the Oberholzers. What were some of the conflicting desires that pulled him in different directions? How did he regard his sisters?

The character of Lois is pretty well developed in this story. What kind of person was she? Select three or four adjectives that could be used in describing her and point out passages in the story to support your choice.

Read aloud some of the sentences that paint the picture of the sleepy little midwestern town. Is the picture convincing?

Who was right in the flare-up between Gerald and Juanita? What is to be said in defense of each of them?

What evidences of petty gossip do you find? How did it affect Gerald? Was it malicious or just curious?

In what ways does Gerald show that the new responsibility is causing him to grow up? How old do you suppose he really is? How do you know that he loved and admired his father? How does he show that he is really still a little boy?

How old do you think Gerald's mother is? How does she

show that she is still young enough to want to enjoy life as young people do? The last few lines of the story are full of pathos. A little flame grows bright for a moment and is quickly quenched. What caused this to happen? Would you approve if Gerald's mother decided to marry again later? What would Gerald think of it? Who would care most — he or the girls? How would you like to finish this story?

C Q, C Q, C Q

WHAT do you know about radio hams? Perhaps you are one yourself, or know one in your neighborhood. Tell some of the rules that govern them. What can you tell of present restrictions and responsibilities?

The family in this story is on a different economic level from that of John or Gerald or Joie. How would you describe Beezy's family? Do you think they really understood him? Was it a good or a bad thing that Mr. Eaton could not afford to give Beezy the full amount for his radio? Why?

How do you know that Beezy's love of radio was not just a passing fancy? How did he show aptitude for the work?

Have you met types like the two girls in the story? Why do girls behave as Felice did? What do boys really think of excessive make-up? Why do you suppose Beezy was deceived about Felice for so long? How did Bets show herself to be worthy of anyone's friendship? Would she have made a good pioneer? Tell why.

In what ways did Beezy's mother show herself to be very sympathetic and understanding? How did she prove that she had a good sense of humor? When did Beezy show lack of consideration for her?

Small disappointments often look very large indeed to young people who have not yet the measuring rod of experience. What is the best antidote for self-pity? How did it work in Beezy's case?

Of what great disaster in recent times could this story

have been written? Do you know what part radio hams actually did play in the story of devastating floods not so long ago? Can you recall any individual stories of heroism?

Read a passage that illustrates Beezy's ingenuity — his courage — his temporary loss of values — his mother's humor — Bets's loyalty.

Why did Beezy feel grown-up after the whole thing was over? How does he measure up with John in "Judge" and Joie in "It Is Morning"? What qualities do you most admire in each of the boys?

What other benefits has radio conferred upon us? Which is the greater invention, radio or the airplane? Which has been of greater use to us? Want to debate?

IT IS MORNING

THIS story begins rather slowly and indirectly. You may have to read the first pages more than once before you get the matter of the check straightened out. How do you feel about the check? Did Mrs. Nash have a right to it? How could you justify her lie to her husband?

What do you know about agricultural colleges? About the Department of Agriculture bulletins?

You note that this story is not told in the usual narrative manner with one event or incident following another. We follow the workings of Rachel's mind all the time. We know exactly how she schemed and feared and worried. What is the strong motive behind everything she does? Look for passages that show how painfully she feels every failure, fear, or disappointment that overtakes Joie.

Something about John in the story "Judge" makes you feel that he and Joie would have understood each other. What is the common bond?

Did Rachel Nash still have any dreams of her own? How did she get a little pleasure in her few moments of rest? Do you ever suspect your own mother of pretending when she

says, "No, I don't want any more — you take it," or "I don't really need a new coat — we'll get Bill that sweater that he wants and a party dress for Mary"?

Joie felt rather bitter toward his father. Was he justified? What is to be said for Mr. Nash? What quality is lacking in men like him?

We catch only a little glimpse of Cynthia. How much of her story can you make out?

What do you know about floriculture? What does the word mean? What does agriculture mean? Can you explain tubers, smudgepots, mulchings, stunted, boll weevil?

"Maw, you'll kill yourself."

"Get up, son, it is morning."

As you finish the story do you feel breathless, as if you had lived through an epic struggle yourself? What will happen to Rachel after Joie leaves for school? How will the father take it? What do you predict for Joie?

What price are you willing to pay for your own education?

ALVERA'S TROUBADOUR

WHAT do you know about the musical ability of the Italian people? Name some of the great Italian musicians. What do you know of Italian opera? Do you see any relationship between the pleasure received by a group of children from an old Italian organ-grinder and that received by a rich and distinguished audience from a noted Italian tenor on the stage of the Metropolitan Grand Opera House? Discuss the point.

You are introduced to Alvera's grandfather by the incident of the fifty-cent piece. What does this tell you about him? Since you now know the end of the tale, explain the device by which the author tells the story. In what other books or movies have you seen a similar device used?

What else do you learn of the grandparents as you listen to their conversation about Alvera's "temperament." Were

they right in their guess about her difficulty with English? Is there any solution to that problem?

What do you learn about Miss Wade through Alvera's worried thinking? How do you know that she was not only a good teacher, but an unusually understanding person?

"Hard work, well loved is a tonic to the spirit." Can you cite occasions on which you have made yourself feel better by plunging into some good hard work? Perhaps you have read of such instances.

How did Miss Wade show her honesty and wisdom during her call on the Calusos? She told Alvera that she had no right to interfere with another person's chosen occupation. What do you think? In another story, "Singing Eagles," in this book, you find a similar problem. If you have read the story, compare it with this one; if not, keep the question in mind until you do read it.

Are you satisfied with the end of the story? How would you have ended it? What do you think will really happen?

Does the author's description of Alvera's mental struggle seem overdrawn? Is it possible to be equally confused about other questions? What are some of the problems regarding social and religious matters that often puzzle young people? How can they best be dealt with? Discuss this matter.

THE CAR

THE reading of this story ought to lead to a number of profitable discussions, even debates or forums, on the question of the family car. How do you think that question should be dealt with?

What about junior licenses? Upon what grounds should they be issued? What responsibilities do they carry with them? What abuses of junior licenses have come to your attention?

How did you like Mrs. Barton's solution of her particular problem? It might be fun to dramatize the family scene

which would probably take place immediately after the moment at which the story ends.

The Sunday paper is a secondary problem in the story. How do you deal with it in your house? Who has the first right to the paper? Do you feel any responsibility for returning to your father the section you have succeeded in grabbing, or do you throw it on the floor where you happen to be? (Mother is usually too busy in the kitchen, to become a participant in the great Sunday paper battle.) Should each section be folded properly and placed in some central spot accessible to everybody? See if you can't work out some answer to this Sunday morning difficulty.

There is some shrewd character study in this story, too. Which family type is best portrayed? What are some of the characteristics that the mother possessed? Do you think that all women possess such characteristics, or do they acquire them in self-defense? In what other respects is the story realistic?

Did the climax surprise you? What other short story writer frequently used the "surprise" ending?

We hear a good deal about the Bill of Rights these days, but many people forget that all rights and privileges imply responsibilities. You might enjoy drawing up a joint Bill of Rights for parents and children.

SOUTH TOWARD HOME

WHAT impression did you get of Rick Brown's family before you had finished even six paragraphs? Did you notice particularly that everyone in the family had fingered Rick's letter, and felt it, and held it up to the light, and shaken it, *but* nobody had opened it. Do you always show equal respect for other people's property in your family? What rights have individual members of a family, anyway? How much privacy is a person entitled to? Here is a matter for discussion.

How did Rick comfort himself every time he began to wonder if he would be able to make good? What was his father's advice? Does it sound familiar?

What is meant by a "Hoosier hick"? With that as a clue can you tell what part of the country is the scene of this story?

Why did De Vault tell Phillips to "take what you get and say thanks for it"? What do you know about the need for skilled workers in defense industries?

Did any of the things that Rick found out about the factory the first day surprise you, too? What did you learn that was new to you? What did it mean to be a "trained" worker in that particular factory? What is the difference between being trained and merely being instructed?

You often rebel at your parents and teachers when they insist upon having something done exactly right. You say, "Aw, that's good enough." How does industry regard "good enough"? How do you know from Rick's behavior under criticism that he was a thoroughbred?

In nearly all shops and factories, whenever a "green" man goes to work, he is subjected to some kind of hazing. Who initiated Ricky? How did he apparently take it? What happens when the new man *can't* "take it"?

Why do you suppose Rick was so slow to learn? How do you account for the difference between what Andrews said to Rick when he seemed stupid and what he said to Mr. Watson *about* Rick? What did Mr. Watson mean by a "pattern"?

What were the qualities that made the men respect Mr. Watson? Is it all right to be a "terrific crank" about airplane engines and tank motors? What is the relationship between the man who makes or inspects the tank and the man who drives it on the battlefield?

That was a very interesting description of Phillips that Pete gave. Did it give you any ideas? "Mechanics the

world around speak the same language. They all know machine talk from Java to Istanbul." If you were traveling by plane over Africa, Asia, or South America, and dropped down to an airport, what kind of men would service your plane? How would you make them understand what you wanted? What could you take for granted?

"If that station wagon won't climb that hill under any conditions, I want to know it." It is interesting how this theme of integrity runs through all these stories, isn't it? Can you explain the difference between integrity and efficiency?

At exactly what point in the story did Rick really begin to see the "pattern"? How could you tell?

What did you think of Miss Anderson? Did she and Rick have any characteristics in common? Are they typically American? Why do you think so? How would you define the American "pattern"?

Mrs. Jackson explains the title of her story by saying that "the boy was homesick and stood on the berm (which means a narrow path) looking south — toward home."

SINGING EAGLES

IN this story you find a type of struggle that is different from any of the others in this book. How would you define it?

You find also two stories running concurrently at the beginning. Do you find that your interest is too much divided between the stories of Martha and Bruce and Tenny and Peg?

Try to analyze the four principal characters. What kind of person was each? How did their standards of what is important in life differ? Each one was struggling with a problem. See if you can state those problems clearly.

What do you think of the way Peg treated Tenny's "rare devotion"?

Tenny said, ". . . you are safer in the air than motoring on a crowded road." Defend or argue that statement.

Can you defend Tenny's action in going up without his parachute? Was it courage, bravado, or a kind of superstition?

How did Peg's grief affect Martha's attitude toward Bruce's flying?

What did you think of Martha's letter to Bruce? Could Bruce have written the last sentence himself? What weapon did Martha use to gain her point? Was she justified? Why could the peace that followed not be a lasting peace?

What did Bruce mean when he said, "Tenny saved me"?

What caused the strange reticence between Bruce and Martha after the accident? Why wasn't Martha happy at getting her way?

Could you understand the doctor's explanation of Bruce's mental condition? What did he mean?

How did Martha find out how Bruce really felt? What did he mean by ". . . you leave me nothing—not even yourself"? Don't answer that question offhand. It is important. Talk it over.

Have you learned anything from this story that should be of permanent value to you? What?

FLINT AND FIRE

NEW ENGLAND, because it was settled by those hardy pioneers who came here to find freedom, is supposed to breed people whose character is as strong as their granite hills. It is true, indeed, that New Englanders usually have a sturdy independence and honesty, both commendable traits, but it is also true that they can sometimes be as hard as flint. There is a point beyond which decision becomes merely stubbornness. When a stubborn person finally gives up his own iron will, however, in order that someone else may profit, there is greater generosity than in a similar action by one less

fiercely independent. Show how independence almost ceased to be a virtue in the case of at least three characters in the story. Who should have been the first to give in? Why should the person in the more favored position give in first in any argument?

In these days, the movies and the radio have accustomed us to an appalling absence of emotional restraint. We have to remind ourselves that a reasonable degree of reticence is a virtue. Show how such a virtue carried to an extreme, as in the case of Ev'leen Ann, can become a vice and work mischief in the human mind. What advantage has the person who can speak openly of his troubles?

Do you get any clear picture of the person telling the story? How did a person capable of so detached a view of New Englanders happen to be in that farmhouse? What kind of person was the cousin? How did he show that he had changed his mind about the lack of emotion in the country people? Which character most arouses your sympathy? Which is to you most admirable?

Did you note the New England dialect? Quote two or three examples and give their equivalent in ordinary English.

You have words to describe people who do not show their feelings — *deadpan* and *pokerface*. Look up the word *stoic*. Has it anything to do with the people in this story? You have been reading about *New England*. In the light of recent world events, does stoicism seem to be a constant characteristic of the English people?

What do *caustic* and *sardonic* mean?

How can an answer be “grotesquely out of key”?

What is an “involuntary self-revelation”?

THE GIFT OF THE MAGI

OF all the stories written by O. Henry “The Gift of the Magi” is probably the most beloved. You are likely to find it in other collections, but it is like the Dickens “Christmas

Carol" or "The Night before Christmas"—one never grows tired of it. Try to analyze the story. What is the characteristic that gives it immortality? The scene of the story is not recent. It is definitely dated. For one thing, where would you find anyone with hair like Della's nowadays? (Did that hair, by the way, remind you of another lady with wonderful hair? There is one in an old fairy tale, and one in a tale connected with the English town of Coventry, so nearly destroyed in the Second World War.) Neither Jim nor Della is a person of the least importance, yet we take them to our hearts. Did you almost feel a lump in your throat when you found out about the watch? The hair was bad enough, but that *would* grow again.

What convinces you that this is a true marriage of people who belong to each other? Do you think that young people nowadays are too much concerned with the material—with such things as automobiles and electrical gadgets? What are some of the things without which young people feel that they can hardly begin married life? What should be a minimum? What is the most important thing?

Did you note the clever way in which O. Henry says even unimportant things? Let us see if you understood. Do as he suggested and for ten seconds "regard with discreet scrutiny some inconsequential object in the other direction" If you can do that without a dictionary, you may feel reasonably satisfied with your vocabulary. But before you get too proud, what is "meretricious ornamentation" and what is "an uneventful chronicle"? Now we shall see. Very well, pass out the dictionaries.

THE ORDEAL AT MT. HOPE

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR, a Negro himself, knew at first hand of the relationship between the whites and Negroes in the period after the Civil War. He knew Booker T. Washington, too, and shared his dreams for the Negro. Both men believed in industrial training and as much intel-

lectual education as the individual could absorb. This story was written forty years ago. What has been done for the Negro since then? Compare the lot of the Negro in the South today with that forty years ago. Is it any better in the North? What jobs are open to them?

What two types of Negro are presented in this story? What was the basis of misunderstanding between parents and son? Is it just as likely to occur among white people? What was the main strength in A'nt Ca'line's life? How does that tendency often manifest itself in Negro life? What is its musical expression?

How did the young minister show himself to be a true shepherd of his little flock? When did he use good psychology? When did he give evidence of exceptional courage? If you have read the O. Henry story, "A Retrieved Reformation," do you note a point of similarity between the minister and the detective? How does Mr. Dunbar's story bear out the Tuskegee Institute theory of industrial education for the Negro? How does the story of Brother Dokesbury show that Negroes are capable of high leadership?

Look up some of the poems of Paul Laurence Dunbar and learn to know him as a poet, too. Try *Lyrics of Lowly Life*.

THE RIVERMAN

YOU have read of New England restraint. Now in "The Riverman" you find the kind that flourishes in the Northwest. An elephant may have a long memory, but he has nothing on a riverman with a grudge to pay off! Nor can you match these sturdy outdoor men for generosity to a defeated rival. What lessons could a high school sports team learn from Jimmy Powers?

What are some of the qualities needed by rivermen? What did you learn of their code of honor? How did Dick offend against the code? Was Jimmy telling the truth when he turned aside the compliment at the end of the story? Why do you think he did rescue Roaring Dick?

What was one of the chief differences between Jimmy Powers and Roaring Dick? Quote two passages that emphasize that difference. Why did the crowd favor Jimmy?

Can you explain *leads*, *feints*, *parries*, and *counters* so that one unfamiliar with boxing could understand the terms?

Did you pick up any lumber lingo? Tell the meaning of these words: *birl*, *peavey*, *jam*, *boom*, *break*, *freshet*, *cookees*.

Who was Paul Bunyan? Tell one of the stories about him. If you don't know him, look him up.

MASTER MARINER

WHAT do you understand by the word seamanship? What similarity is there between good seamanship and good craftsmanship?

What nations have produced some of the best seamen? Give some reasons for their superiority.

Do you know any stories of thrilling rescues at sea made possible by expert seamanship? What do you know about the exploits of our own Coast Guard?

Perhaps you have read Rudyard Kipling's *Captains Courageous* or seen the movie based on that book. How did the sea make a man of Harvey Cheyne?

What sort of person appears to be telling the story of Peter Jordahl? What makes you think that his own story might be worth telling?

"The jury must have accepted the navy's opinions for facts." What does that mean? What is the difference between a fact and an opinion? Are you ever guilty of substituting opinions for facts?

How did Peter Jordahl show his metal after his great disappointment? Hilda was a member of the firm, too. How does she measure up to your idea of what a wife should be? Read a paragraph that sums up their relationship to each other and gives you a feeling of confidence.

Read aloud the part of the story that gave you the most satisfaction.

How many of these nautical terms can you explain?

billet	distress signals	galley
starboard bow	escape hatches	throttle
annunciator	certificate of registry	yellow buoy
foc'sles	right of way	slip the cable

ISRAEL DRAKE

MOST of us are now so accustomed to the presence of state police on all our highways and to the comfortable feeling that we can always depend on them in any emergency that we are hardly aware that they are a comparatively recent department of our national protective agencies. One interesting thing about this story is that it is absolutely true; even the names of the troopers are their real names.

The description of Israel Drake opens interesting avenues of thought. When we seek for the causes that contribute to the making of a criminal we often find factors in his environment that would at least partially account for his anti-social tendencies. Miss Mayo suggests that some people are just born hawks as others are born barnyard fowl. Do you consider this a reasonable point of view? If so, do you believe that the hawks could be tamed if they were discovered early enough? How?

What do you think of the local police in the towns where Israel Drake carried on his activities? How do you account for their cowardice and lack of initiative? How are village law-enforcing agents often chosen and elected? Why do you think Israel emerged from the penitentiary a "better criminal" than before?

There are two fine sentences in the paragraph describing Lynn Adams. Go back and read them again — aloud. How would you like to have that said about you? What quality did he have in common with Israel Drake? Trooper Edward Hallisey wasn't so bad either. Why would a trooper need the particular characteristics mentioned?

Did you note the marvelously accurate timing and teamwork necessary in the capture? Whenever you think that something is "almost" good enough or "almost" near enough, remember how many jobs — and lives — depend upon absolute accuracy and dependability.

What aspects of the state police code interested you especially? Do you know any other stories about state troopers that show their courage and initiative?

What rather puzzling characteristics of Israel Drake did you discover? What do you think of his mentality? Did he have any good traits?

There is a good deal of conversation in this story. It would dramatize well or you might make a radio script out of it.

SALT OF THE EARTH

NOW you know what was in the letter that James Hicks received from the Company, and you are probably as pleased as he was. What is there about James that arouses your sympathy?

Glance back through the story and find passages that reveal the character and philosophy of James Hicks. Tell what characteristics each passage shows.

In times of nervous tension, the strain is likely to show in little acts or words. Name two or three ways in which this tendency showed itself in James. What do you do when some member of your family comes home "all on edge"? Do you with sympathetic imagination try to guess at the cause and do all in your power to ease the tension, or do you snap back and start a real battle?

You probably know from your reading of history that periods of depression are likely to alternate with periods of prosperity. How do you account for these cycles? How do wars affect them? What mistakes are people likely to make in times of prosperity?

What do you know about methods of providing for old age and unemployment? Tell what you can about: old age pensions; various types of insurance; group hospitalization provisions. What attempts has the government made to solve these problems?

James told Tillie that he liked the chain store better than he would like a store of his own. What do you think of his argument? Which would you prefer, and why?

James never felt tired although he worked, as Tillie said, as if he were "possessed." How do you account for that? By the way, what did Tillie mean by that expression? Do you remember how it is used in the Bible? How would you answer James's criticism of the boys who helped in the store?

The company had to let Gene go. Did you find that you were not particularly sorry? Why?

How about adding a few new words to your vocabulary? If the italicized words below are unfamiliar to you, look them up. Use all the words in sentences of your own.

<i>grimace of obsequiousness</i>	<i>automatic alertness</i>
<i>sudden loquaciousness</i>	<i>argued such heresy</i>
<i>more sanguine than James</i>	<i>ways were incalculable</i>
<i>reminded of their lapses</i>	

LOCOMOTIVE 38, THE OJIBWAY

IN many parts of the world, people believe that wild Indians still roam the streets of America and that chiefs in full war regalia are an everyday sight. Some people in the United States are not much better informed. What do you know about present-day Indians? Where are Indian reservations located? Which are the most populous tribes? What kind of education are Indians given? What is meant by the expression "wards of the government" in connection with Indians? Have Indians any cause for complaint against the government? What kind of Indians were the Ojibways—peaceful or warlike?

We must assume that the story of Locomotive 38 is at least partially true since Mr. Saroyan's book is really autobiographical. What other odd Indian names have you come across? How does Locomotive 38 differ from the usually accepted picture of the Indian? What characteristics does he show that are typically Indian?

How did Aram show himself to be a typical American boy even though he did come from the Armenian settlement?

Point out two or three illustrations of the difference money makes in any situation.

Part of the humor of this astonishing tale comes from what is left out. What questions occurred to you as you read it? Did they have any satisfactory answers?

The Indian was supposed by the people of the town to be crazy. How did he show that he was not only sane but very sagacious? What good advice did he give Aram? What about his criticism of Americans? Is there any truth to it?

Aram couldn't explain Locomotive 38. How do you figure him out? Do you think he is typical of the modern Indian?

You might find it interesting to compare the Indians and the Negroes of this country with regard to their social, political, and economic condition. That may sound like a large order, but you can divide the work among the various members of your class. You will find plenty of material in the library. Use the *Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature* to find contemporary articles. You may come across some answers to that last question.

MR K*A*P*L*A*N AND VOCABULARY

BY now you know that the teacher's lot is not always enviable. Poor Mr. Parkhill had his troubles. Fortunately, however, there are not many pupils like Mr. Kaplan. What do you know about the classes for foreigners conducted in the high schools of most large cities? What do you know about present immigration restrictions? Is there as great a neces-

sity for such classes now? Tell what you know about present laws with regard to aliens.

Mr. Parkhill was disturbed because Mr. Kaplan's pronunciations resulted in such astonishing statements as "ve all heaven a fine time." You probably laughed merrily at that. BUT, have you ever said, "Whudjagonnadonow?" or "Jever play hockey?" or "WhynyucomenIallyu? Dinyahearne?" English was a new language to Mr. K*A*P*-L*A*N. What excuse can you offer?

"As Mr. Kaplan handled his crayons, he smiled with the sweet serenity of one in direct communication with his Muse." What does that mean? How many muses are there? With which one was Mr. Kaplan communing?

Have you ever used any of Mr. Kaplan's methods to find out the answer from the teacher's expression? How do you assist cerebration? Are you sure that you have any?

Will you please assist Mrs. Moskowitz and explain what is wrong with her sentence. Give her a good illustration.

Mr. Kaplan would have made a good general. What does strategy mean? What means do you use to evade the teacher's eye or to get out of answering embarrassing questions? If you feel that answering this question is dangerous, remember that a witness does not have to give incriminating testimony against himself.

Translate "Hau Kay" and "Ufcawss." What word should Miss Hirschfield have used?

You could probably guess that the scene of this story is New York City. Nowhere else does one hear the peculiar transformation of *or*, *ir*, *er*, and *ur* into *oi*. There is an amusing parody on an old saying: "The oily boid catches the woim that squoims in a poifect coicle." You wouldn't have trouble with that sentence, perhaps, but what do you do with, "I have a cup of coffee every morning before I go to my office on Fifth Avenue between Fifty-fifth and Sixty-sixth streets"?

Well, that is a digression. Back to vocabulary. Never

let it be said that you were outdone by H*Y*M*A*N
K*A*P*L*A*N. Look up and use in sentences:

dire	flamboyant	ecstasy	sufferance
tutelage	colloquy	bravado	mundane
euphoria	immobility	noncommittal	coma

THE CITIZEN

AMERICAN citizenship is a glorious heritage, often little appreciated by those who are born to it. To those who come from afar and after bitter hardship and trial achieve it, it is a priceless treasure — the goal of all their dreams.

What do you know about aliens? About naturalization? About naturalization courts? What are the steps necessary for an alien to become an American citizen?

What have you read recently about registration of aliens? Why is it necessary? What are grounds for deportation?

This story about Ivan of the Bridge was written more than twenty years ago. How does the condition of the peasant Ivan of that time compare with that of a man of his type in most European countries today? What are their dreams now? What changes have been made in the immigration laws?

What did the smith mean when he said, "A long tongue has given many a man a journey that he never expected"?

Name some of the characteristics of Ivan and Anna. Read aloud the passages that support your statements.

Ivan and Anna "came face to face with the Terror." How would that Terror look today? What are its new aspects?

Why does the author mention the Israelites? Who was their oppressor? What was their dream? Tell the story of the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire.

Relate an incident from the story which shows that Ivan understood democracy.

What do you know about Ellis Island? Compare conditions there now with those of twenty years ago. What do

you know about immigrant ships of that period? What is meant by "steerage"?

What differences did Ivan and Anna find between the police of their old home and those of their new country?

Name some of the great citizens of our country who came here as immigrants and tell how they have served their adopted country.

Compare this story with "Alvera's Troubadour," also found in this book. What is the relationship between them?

THE ADVENTURE OF JOE SMITH, AMERICAN

THE backbone of American industry just now is the mechanic — the man who can work with machines. The speeding up of American defense industries has called for more and more skilled workmen — men who work with tools, with dies and lathes — men who make precision instruments of almost incredible accuracy. The watchwords of the mechanic are accuracy and dependability.

You have heard much of integrity in this book. It appeared to be a fairly constant factor in the characters of those who struggled from humble beginnings up to success. Joe Smith was "just an ordinary guy." How did he prove that he had integrity?

Is your idea of being an American the same as Joe's? Where did he get most of his ideas? Do you live in the same kind of make-believe world? Take time to analyze just how much your thinking is colored by your contacts with comic strips, adventure and detective stories, screen, and radio. Is this influence good or bad? How can the bad effects be counteracted? Discuss this topic.

When Joe was nearly unconscious, his mind clung to the simple comforting things of his everyday life — his wife, his children, his home. Why do you suppose these things came into his mind? How do you know that he had a good wife and that his marriage was happy? He discovered, as he

recalled one event after another, that perhaps he had taken the good things of life too much for granted. Do you find yourself similarly lacking in gratitude for a good home, a happy family life, and other blessings? What would be a practical way of showing your love and gratitude to your family? To your country?

This story is decidedly melodramatic in parts. Do you think that the brutality is overdone? Could the story have been told equally effectively without it?

What impression do you have as you finish the story? Is it just so much flag-waving, or is there really an idea in it? If so, what?

Exactly what does democracy mean to you? What do we mean by the democratic way of life? What are the advantages of democracy? What are its drawbacks?

Why do we Americans take our freedom so much for granted? What would it mean to us if we did not have the Bill of Rights? Get your history book and study that document. How many kinds of freedom are granted to us by our Constitution? How are these rights sometimes abused? What are the responsibilities of a citizen in a democracy? Is there such a thing as absolute freedom? What obligations go with it?

Write a theme of about 250 words on the topic, "What Democracy Means to Me."

The vocabulary in the story of "Joe Smith, American" is not very difficult, but there are several phrases that might be clearer to you if you looked up the key word in each. When you have the meaning of the key word, glance rapidly over the story again to find the phrase containing it and see if the whole passage isn't more meaningful.

unquestionable virtues
impinged on
one iota
part of his *credo*
monstrous lie of *invincibility*

share *vicariously*
futilely he tried to strike
anodyne to pain
naive and simple externally
shoddy fabrics

AMERICAN SHORT STORY COLLECTIONS CLASSIFIED BY LOCALITY

THE EAST

Becker, May Lamberton (Ed): *Golden Tales of New England; Tiverton Tales*
Brown, Alice: *Meadow Grass; A Country Road Country Neighbors*
Davis, Richard Harding: *Van Bibber*
Deland, Margaret: *Old Chester Tales; Doctor Lavendar's People*
Fisher, Dorothy Canfield: *Hillsboro People*
Freeman, Mary E Wilkins: *A New England Nun; Wind in The Rosebud; Edgewater People; A Humble Romance*
Henry, O : *The Four Million; The Voice of The City; The Trimmed Lamp*
Hurst, Fanny: *Every Soul Hath Its Song*
Jewett, Sarah Orne: *A White Heron; The Queen's Twin; Tales of New England*
Lincoln, Joseph C.: *Cape Cod Stories; The Old Home House*
Mayo, Katherine. *The Standard Bearers*
Singmaster, Elsie. *Bred in the Bone; Gettysburg*
Slosson, Annie Trumbull: *Dumb Foxglove*
Wiggin, Kate Douglas: *The Village Watch Tower*

THE SOUTH

Allen, James Lane: *A Kentucky Cardinal; Flute and Violin*
Becker, May Lamberton (Ed) *Golden Tales of the Old South*
Cable, George Washington: *Old Creole Days*
Carter, Mary N.: *North Carolina Sketches*
Cobb, Irvin S.: *Local Color; Old Judge Priest; Back Home*

AMERICAN SHORT STORY COLLECTIONS 389

Cohen, Octavius Roy. *Polished Ebony*
Craddock, C. E. (Mary N. Murfree): *In the Tennessee Mountains*
Dunbar, Paul Laurence: *Folks from Dixie; In Old Plantation Days*
Fox, John, Jr. *The Kentuckians; Christmas Eve on Lonesome; In Happy Valley*
Hall, Eliza Calvert: *Aunt Jane of Kentucky; Land of Long Ago*
Harris, Joel Chandler: *Uncle Remus; Free Joe; Tales of the Home Folks*
Page, Thomas Nelson. *In Ole' Virginia*
Rawlings, Marjorie Kinnan: *When the Whippoorwill*
Smith, F Hopkinson. *Colonel Carter of Carterville; A Day at Laguerre's*
Stuart, Ruth McEnery: *Napoleon Jackson; Holly and Pizen; Sonny; The Golden Wedding*

THE MIDDLE WEST

Ferber, Edna: *Mother Knows Best; Roast Beef Medium; Emma McChesney and Company; Half Portions; Buttered Side Down*
Gale, Zona. *Friendship Village; Neighborhood Stories*
Garland, Hamlin. *Main-travelled Roads; Prairie Song and Western Story*
Hughes, Rupert: *In a Little Town*
Norris, Frank: *A Deal in Wheat; The Third Circle*
Suckow, Ruth: *Iowa Interiors; Children and Older People; Country People*
Tarkington, Booth: *Penrod; Penrod and Sam; In the Arena; The Fascinating Stranger*
White, William Allen: *In Our Town; Stratagems and Spoils*

THE WEST

Austin, Mary: *Lost Borders*
Beach, Rex: *Pardners*
Dobie, Charles Caldwell: *The Arrested Moment*
Harte, Bret. *Luck of Roaring Camp; Outcasts of Poker Flat*
Henry, O. *Heart of the West*
London, Jack: *Love of Life; Son of the Wolf*
White, Stewart Edward: *Arizona Nights; Blazed Trail Stories*
Wister, Owen: *The Virginian; Red Men and White; Members of the Family*

OTHER SHORT STORY COLLECTIONS

Becker, May Lamberton (Ed) *Golden Tales of Our America*
Coleman and Harper *Western Prose and Poetry*
Hints and Grebanier *Modern American Vistas*
Holman, Mabel: *Short Story Parade*
O'Brien, Edward J.: *50 Best American Short Stories (1914-1939); Modern American Short Stories*
Ramsay. *Short Stories of America*
Richter, Conrad: *Early American*
Royster, James Finch *American Short Stories*
Schweikert, H C.: *Short Stories*
Tremaine, McDowell: *American Sketch Book*
Williams, Blanche Colton *Book of Short Stories; Great American Short Stories*
Wood and Husband: *Short Stories As You Like Them*

YEARBOOKS

O'Brien, Edward J. *Best Short Stories of 1915, 1916, etc.*
Williams, B C. (Ed): *O Henry Memorial Award Prize Stories 1920, 1923, etc.*

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Firkins, Ina Ten Eyck: *Index to Short Stories*

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